DÆDALUS

JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
SUMMER 1998
US: $7.95
CANADA: $10.35

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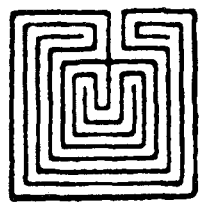
DÆDALUS

JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

Early Modernities

Summer 1998

Issued as Volume 127, Number 3, of the
Proceedings of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences



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Summer 1998, "Early Modernities"
Issued as Volume 127, Number 3, of the Proceedings of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.
ISBN 0-87724-007-8

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Library of Congress Catalog Number 12-30299.

Editorial Offices: Dædalus, *Norton's Woods, 136 Irving Street, Cambridge, MA 02138. Telephone: (617) 491-2600; Fax: (617) 576-5088; E-mail: daedalus@amacad.org*

Dædalus (ISSN 0011-5266) *is published quarterly by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. US subscription rates: for individuals—$33, one year; $60.50, two years; $82.50, three years; for institutions—$49.50, one year; $82.50, two years; $110, three years. Canadian subscription rates: for individuals—$42, one year; $78.75, two years; $109.50, three years; for institutions—$60, one year; $102, two years; $138.50, three years. All other foreign subscribers must add $7.00 per year to the price of US subscriptions. Replacement copies for damaged or misrouted issues will be sent free of charge up to six months from the date of original publication. Thereafter, back copies are available for the current cover price plus postage and handling. GST number: 14034 3229 RT.*

All subscription orders, single-copy orders, and change-of-address information must be sent in writing *to the* Dædalus *Business Office, 136 Irving Street, Suite 100, Cambridge, MA 02138, U.S.A.*

Printed in the United States of America. Printing Office: 2901 Byrdhill Road, Richmond, VA 23228.

U.S.A. newsstand distribution by Eastern News Distributors, Inc., 2020 Superior Street, Sandusky, OH 44870 (Telephone: 800-221-3148).

Periodicals postage paid at Boston, MA, and at additional mailing offices.

Postmaster: Send address changes to DÆDALUS, *136 Irving Street, Suite 100, Cambridge, MA 02138, U.S.A.*

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Preface to the Issue "Early Modernities"

THE HISTORICAL TIME PERIODS conventionally used to delineate the distinctive phases of European civilization are generally represented as ancient, medieval, early modern, modern, and contemporary. If such divisions are by definition Eurocentric, intended to describe real periods in European life as historians have imagined them, they cannot in their literal original European meaning be used also to define the changing civilizations of Asia. Yet if the dynamics of the major Asian societies, so diverse and complex, are to be made meaningful, it may be useful to think of how they developed when great parts of Europe, invaded from the east and the north, took on a wholly new character, becoming feudal and, in time, absolutist, predominantly agrarian but increasingly urban. While European (and American) historians have collaborated successfully to analyze the most minute aspects of European life during these centuries, what it meant for societies to experience the Reformation or the Renaissance (in its various permutations), and what the Enlightenment brought to societies only beginning to recognize the significance of the new sixteenth- and seventeenth-century science, there have been no comparable in-depth analyses of the civilizations of the East during these same centuries and how they changed.

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This issue of *Dædalus,* in its concern with "early modernities"—the term is significant, for it does not pretend that there was a single "early modernity"—is intended to draw attention to a fact all too rarely acknowledged. While we know an enormous amount about the differences between England and France in both the medieval and the early modern periods—national histories of individual European states are a staple even now in the historical literature of the late twentieth century—there is no comparable general knowledge of Asian histories, describing and analyzing the differences between the principal civilizations of that vast region. This is not to say that scholars have neglected these civilizations or that their research has produced negligible results, but only that the kind of comprehensive scholarship about Europe that owes so much to the monographic studies initiated in the nineteenth century in the major universities of Europe and in the twentieth century both in Europe and in the United States has no precise equivalent for Asia. A glance at the holdings of the major libraries of the world, or at the articles that have appeared very recently in the principal learned journals, testifies to this condition. Those who have planned and written for this issue of *Dædalus* do not believe that this situation will continue very long into the twenty-first century. Indeed, this may be one of the more compelling reasons for choosing to deal with subjects treated in this volume.

To assert this is to argue something that may have very great importance. If scholarship in the natural sciences is today obviously international, and has become increasingly so since the end of World War II, with major contributions being made by scholars in many societies, some believe that the same is true in the social sciences. Yet it is a fact that Asia, like Africa and Latin America, figures less in major scholarly tomes than do either Europe or North America. Asian history, for example, is not a "heavy industry" in its intellectual, cultural, political, or social dimensions in the way that European and American history have been for a century and continue to be today. Even a cursory glance at the footnotes to the essays in this issue will suggest how much a handful of university and commercial presses in Europe and the United States are responsible for publishing the major studies on which scholars of Asia continue to depend. While that situation is not likely to change immediately, there

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are many reasons to believe that is will not continue for very long into the next millennium. To argue this is not to say that the West's time of intellectual dominance is over, that the new century will belong to Asia and to Asian scholars who will transform the social sciences, calling attention to societies too little studied in the past. It is to say something more significant and less controversial—that the social scientific studies of the future are likely to take into greater account societies and religions, traditions and practices still too little known today, concealed from the West by many factors, not least the general unfamiliarity with the languages of the Asian world of yesterday (and today). To understand the relations between politics and culture in Asia in the precolonial period, for example, may be as important as knowing what happened after the advent of modern European imperial expansion in Asia, and may even help to explain much that remains distinctive about both worlds, still so very different.

If "Early Modernities" reminds us that India, China, Japan, Korea, and indeed the whole of Southeast Asia merit our attention, that Spain has as much reason to interest us for what it reveals about the early modern period in Europe as France or England, that there is as much to be learned from a study of the German Enlightenment as from the French or the English, then it will have achieved one of its purposes—to make us aware of how narrow many of our perspectives on the past have been. There is, however, another reason for believing this issue of *Dædalus* to be important. Today, when it is assumed that we understand contemporary nationalism and nation-building, rarely considering the very different traditions from which such state-building sprang, when there is almost too much discussion of the "global village," with its uniformities and purportedly inevitable trajectories, there is a need for seeing modernity as something other than a single condition with a preordained future. The so-called democracies of the world today may be as different in their character and political, intellectual, and moral perspectives as were the societies of Asia and Europe in the second millennium of the Christian era. If this *Dædalus* issue, despite the unfamiliarity of its scholarship for many readers in North America and Europe, helps to direct attention to new questions—the triumph of the vernacular, for example, and the creation of

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public spaces allowing for critical discourse in societies sometimes superficially described by Western scholars as despotic or authoritarian—it will give a new cast to what some believe to be the intellectual and institutional precursors to modernity. More than that, it could lead to a questioning of some of the more conventional analyses of the contemporary world. "Early Modernities" may be followed, in time, by a *Dædalus* issue entitled "Multiple Modernities," which will argue that only in superficial ways is the contemporary world uniform, where earlier traditions and habits have for all practical purposes been extinguished. The concept of *difference* may be as essential to an understanding of contemporary modernities, of late-twentieth-century societies, as it was of earlier ones, less obviously joined by advanced communication technologies.

A great debt is owed to three scholars—Shmuel N. Eisenstadt, Wolfgang Schluchter, and Björn Wittrock—who made this issue possible. Their patience and insight as well as their willingness to proceed slowly, to engage other scholars in arduous intellectual exercises, made the study an exciting experience for all who were involved. The issue originated in a conference that took place in Uppsala in the summer of 1996 as part of the research program on "Collective Identity, Public Sphere, and Political Order: Cultural Foundations and Institutional Formations of Contemporary Societies," sponsored by the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute, the Swedish Collegium for Advanced Study in the Social Sciences (SCASSS), and the Department of Sociology at the University of Heidelberg, now taken up by the Max-Weber-Kolleg at the University of Erfurt. Our thanks go to SCASSS, so greatly helped by the Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Fund, the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute, and the University of Heidelberg for their invaluable financial support. Also, we are grateful for the hospitality afforded those who participated in our meetings by SCASSS, the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute, the Budapest Collegium, and Wolfson College, Cambridge University. Last, but not least, our thanks go to those listed in our Advisory Board, to those who wrote for the issue, and those who did not. Keeping this issue down to a reasonable number of pages was no small challenge, and our authors showed great forbearance in meeting the demands of too-insistent editors.

S.R.G.

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Shmuel N. Eisenstadt and Wolfgang Schluchter

Introduction: Paths to Early Modernities—A Comparative View

I.

THE ESSAYS IN THIS VOLUME were first presented at a conference in Uppsala in the summer of 1996 as part of a program on "Collective Identity, Public Sphere, and Political Order: Cultural Foundations and Institutional Formations of Contemporary Societies."[1] The conference focused on the transformation of political order in early modernity. In the European context, early modernity refers to the period from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, when territorial states became major vehicles for resource mobilization and for the construction of collective identities. In this period, ideas of political order as a nation-state of compatriots, or alternatively as a constitutional republican state of citizens, emerged and superseded older ideas of political order. On the institutional level, it was a period of gradual replacement of an older political order—of stratum-based empires or city states—first by national monarchies and later by nation-states and constitutional republican states.

Our concern is to deal with early modernity in a broad comparative perspective. Normally, one would confine that analysis to Europe, emphasizing the different trajectories and their different outcomes. While this is uncontestably an important endeavor, it would exclude certain questions that we regard as crucial: Were there similar developments in other civilizations, and if so, when did they occur? If they occurred at this time, were they

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primarily due to diffusion or to indigenous factors? Finally, is the term "early modernity" relative to a specific civilization or may it be used more broadly?

Questions of this sort invite us to reexamine comparative historical research as it has evolved, especially since World War II. Such a reexamination could lead to a new approach in this field. Indeed, it is our contention that a new approach is needed, that it must be one that avoids three fallacies: first, that there is only one modernity; second, that looking from the West to the East legitimates the concept of "Orientalism"; and finally, that globalization and multiculturalism ought to be regarded as indications that a new axial principle has in fact emerged, which goes under the name of postmodernity. While postmodernity is not of crucial importance for us, the first and the second issues are. Let us consider them briefly.

II.

Theories of modernization and of modernity, as formulated in the fifties and sixties, were based on the assumption of convergence. It was believed that modernization would wipe out cultural, institutional, structural, and mental differences and, if unimpeded, would lead to a uniform modern world. While minor differences would remain, according to these theories, primarily due to the persistence of premodern factors, in the long run they would fade away.

Today, there is substantially less confidence in the idea that the contemporary world is ruled by the principle of convergence. Indeed, as we approach the end of the twentieth century, new visions of a modern civilization are emerging throughout the world—in Europe and the United States, certainly, where the first cultural program of modernity originated, but also in Asia, Latin America, and Africa. All these developments call for a far-reaching reappraisal of the older visions of modernity and modernization. Such a reappraisal needs to be based on several considerations. First, we need to acknowledge that the expansion of modernity beyond Europe has to be viewed not as a process of repetition but as the crystallization of new civilizations, resembling in many ways the expansion of the great reli-

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gions and the great empires in premodern times. Since the expansion of modernity almost always combines structural, institutional, and cultural factors, its impact on the societies to which it has spread has been more intense recently than was true in the premodern era.

This expansion has spawned a tendency, rather new in the history of mankind, towards universal structural, institutional, and cultural frameworks. It has also created international frameworks, based on certain fundamental premises of modernity and rooted in its basic institutional dimensions. But several modern civilizations have emerged, all multicentered and heterogeneous, all generating their own dynamics. Furthermore, the interrelations among them have never been stable. What came to be regarded as the reference society for others has shifted continuously.

Just as the expansion of premodern civilizations undermined the cultural, institutional, and structural premises of the societies incorporated into them, the same has happened with modern civilizations, opening up new options and possibilities. As a result, a great variety of modern societies have developed, which share many common characteristics but also evince great differences. The first, the so-called "original" modernity, developed in Europe and combined several closely connected dimensions. In structural terms, these included differentiation, urbanization, industrialization, and communication—features identified and analyzed in the first studies of modernization immediately after World War II; in institutional terms, they included the nation-state and the rational capitalist economy; in cultural terms, they allowed for the construction of new collective identities bound up with the nation-state but embedded in a cultural program that entailed different modes of structuring the major arenas of social life.

The theories of modernization of the fifties and sixties, like the classical theories of Marx, Durkheim, and, to a certain extent, Max Weber—or at least in one reading of his works—have implicitly or explicitly conflated these different dimensions. Most of these theories assumed, even if only implicitly, that the basic institutional constellations that came together in early modern Europe and the cultural program related to it would

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ultimately be taken over by all modernizing societies. The studies of modernization assumed that the project of modernity would exhibit hegemonic and homogenizing tendencies, and that it would not only continue in the West but spread and prevail throughout the world. The reality proved to be radically different. The actual developments did not bear out the assumption of convergence, not even in the West. The question that Werner Sombart formulated in the first decade of this century, "Why is there no socialism in the United States?" attests to the recognition of divergence—in this instance, between Europe and the United States.[2] Not only did the various institutional arenas display relatively independent dimensions, but their coming together varied greatly among modernizing societies, and certainly at different periods in their development. This holds also for theories about the relationship between the structural, institutional, and cultural dimensions of societies. The assumption, propagated by many theorists of modernity, that the cultural premises of Western modernity were inherently and necessarily interwoven with the structural and institutional ones were increasingly questioned. While the different dimensions of the original Western crystallization of modernity have constituted the crucial starting point and continual reference point for the processes that developed among various societies throughout the world, the developments themselves have gone far beyond the homogenizing and hegemonic thrust imputed to the original pattern of modernity.

Modernity has spread to most of the world but has not given rise to a single civilization. Far-reaching changes, which went beyond the original code of modernity, have been taking place even in Western societies. The "original" European code of modernity—such as man's active role in the universe, the relation between *Wertrationalität* and *Zweckrationalität*, the conceptions of cosmological time and its relation to historical time, the belief in progress, the relation of progress to history, the relation between the individual and the collectivity and between reason and emotions—has been modified, even altered. Not convergence but divergence has ruled the history of modernity. These differences are not simply cultural; they have institutional dimensions as well. To give but one illustration, the construction

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of the relation between the utopian and the civil, the revolutionary and the normal, the general will and the will of all, the state and civil society entailed not only different modes of institutionalization of political authority and accountability but also different modes of political protest and political activity.

The cultural codes of modernity have not been shaped by the evolutionary potentialities of societies, nor by the natural unfolding of their traditions, nor even by their placement in a new international setting. Rather, they have been shaped by the continuous interaction between the cultural codes of these societies and their exposure to new internal and external challenges. These interactions gave rise to new interpretations of the relation between cosmic and social order, between social and political order, between authority, hierarchy, and equality—interpretations that captivated elites and counterelites, generating heterodoxies and movements of protest. The development of such groups was never uniform. The new elites were more influenced by existing traditions of response to change than has been generally assumed; the old elites were greatly transformed by the new situations.

While the common starting point of many of these developments was indeed the cultural program of modernity as it developed in Europe, its creative appropriation by those that followed inaugurated multiple modernities. While such diversity has certainly undermined the belief in the convergence of modern societies, it has also been closely connected with a globalization of cultural networks and channels of communication far beyond any that existed before. Strangely, this has not created a situation that can be appropriately called postmodern. In a paradoxical way, it has reinforced some of the Enlightenment assumptions of the centrality of a Eurocentered type of modernity.

III.

If there are multiple modernities, then the question arises: To what extent have they been shaped by the historical experience of their respective societies? The very posing of this question invites another: Are the concepts developed in Western social science, and above all in the social-scientific literature on moder-

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nity and modernization, adequate for the analysis of these historical experiences?

This question brings us very close to the debate on "Orientalism," the very core of which was a claim that the concepts used by Western scholars were not only culturally bound but were instruments intended to impose a Western cultural pattern on non-Western societies. Theories of modernity and modernization, so the argument goes, are not neutral and innocent but instruments of Western cultural imperialism. That claim must be taken seriously. It poses a hermeneutical problem that is daunting and still largely unresolved. Interestingly, those who advance this argument do not consider—possibly because of their own strong ideological preoccupations—the most important constructive challenge that the acknowledgment of multiple modernities poses: how to account for the internal dynamics of those non-European modern civilizations in their own terms, without sacrificing the comparative approach. Most of the studies refuting the "Orientalists" go in one of two directions. The first comprises the so-called subaltern studies; the other, more recent and to some extent directed against the subaltern studies, criticizes the emphasis on the modern nation-state as the unit of analysis. Authors of the latter studies have explicitly or implicitly criticized subaltern studies for using Western categories as their major reference points, even if they do so only negatively. They point to the autonomy of such units as regions or arenas of popular culture, neglected or denied because of the emphasis on the nation-state. Neither of these "schools" has addressed the central problem—that of the internal dynamics of these civilizations. Marshall G. Hodgson's *Venture of Islam* and some of his very incisive articles might serve as a model for those who wish to go beyond "Orientalism" and "Antiorientalism" as well.[3]

This missed opportunity by most of the antiorientalists and the implicit Western-centeredness of their own analysis can be illustrated by their misreading of Max Weber. They have tended to see Weber as a Eurocentric author preoccupied with the analysis of the origin of modern capitalism, demonstrating the superiority of the West but neglecting the other side of his argument that emphasized the continual internal dynamics of

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the different civilizations. In his *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie*—and above all in the crucial role he attributed to sectarianism and heterodoxies to account for these dynamics—he provided theories that have been too little considered.[4]

IV.

The recognition of multiple modernities entails an antievolutionary thrust. Does this imply the endorsement of a new kind of historicism or radical cultural relativism, according to which each modern civilization is immediate to God, so to speak, and must be analyzed in its own specific terms? At this point, a methodological note is in order. We are pursuing neither an evolutionary nor a historicist approach. Any evolutionary approach, whether or not based on a separation of form (structure) and content, uses a stage model through which differences are interpreted as deficiencies. Higher is also better, whatever the criterion may be that justifies the hierarchy. A comparative approach does away with this model based on value judgments. Contrary to historicism, it interprets differences as deviances. These are deviances not from a norm but from an ideal type used only for heuristic purposes. Such a common denominator cannot be avoided in comparative research as long as one does not want to slide back into a position that states that everything is distinct and therefore different, a truism indeed. The European constellation in the early modern and Enlightenment period serves as an ideal type to measure deviances, to identify differences encountered in other civilizations. But this is only a beginning. Contrary to the assumptions of many historical and sociological studies that the development of the West should constitute the major yardstick according to which the dynamics of other civilizations are measured, it is the basic assumption of our approach that each civilization has developed distinct institutional formations and cultural foundations and that the specific characteristics of these civilizations should be analyzed not only in terms of their approximation to the West but also in their own terms.

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V.

If we use the European constellation as a point of departure in the sense discussed above, some institutional and cultural components connected with the crystallization of this "first" modernity stand out. The usual picture depicted of the European road to modernity emphasizes the importance of the formation of the absolutist state, which became transformed, in the wake of the Great Revolutions, into the modern nation-state of a constitutional or democratic variety. Concomitant with this transformation a new relation between state and society was established, most notably through the emergence of a civil society and a capitalist economy. In connection with these developments new collective identities were forged, above all in their relation to the nation-state. The constructions of such identities put a very strong emphasis on territoriality, secularism, and civility, together with a strong tendency to impose ideological formulations on these components. It is also noteworthy that so many of them tended to acquire charismatic authority.

This new emphasis established a very strong connection between the construction of the political order and that of the major "encompassing" collectivities, a connection that later became epitomized in the nation-state. The crystallization of the idea of a nation-state points to the congruence between the cultural and political identities of the territorial population; the promulgation, by the center, of strong symbolic and affective commitments to itself; and a close relationship between the center and the more primordial dimensions of human existence and social life.

The story of the construction of this type of collective identity in Europe—starting in the sixteenth century and leading to the crystallization of the territorial and, ultimately, the nation-state—has been studied in great detail. Parallel developments can be observed in the realm of Islam under the Ottoman Safavid and Mogul Empires, in China under the Ming and Ching, in Japan under the Tokugawa, in Vietnam, and even in Southeast Asia. But such parallel development did not necessarily mean, contrary to the assumption of many contemporary studies, that the pattern of relations between territorial boundaries and other

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components of collective identity (especially the primordial ones) and their relations to the centers of societies pointed in the same direction as in Europe. The differences are closely related to long-term processes that have affected all the great civilizations of Europe and Asia during the last millennium. They involve a shift towards the use of vernacular languages, a reconstruction of collective identities, and considerable modifications in the nature of the political order. Thus, in Europe, there was a slow but constant growth in the use of vernacular languages and a concomitant shift from imperial types of political order towards more nationally conceived ones. Indologists report a similar growth, in this instance complementing rather than replacing the sacred languages of Sanskrit and Pali in various parts of the Indian subcontinent, but there was no emergence of clearly defined, territorially bound political orders, at least not in the European sense of the term. In the Far East, on the other hand, both classical Chinese language and the imperial order were maintained in spite of great turmoil during these centuries.

VI.

This requires us to think again about the adequacy of the concepts used in the analysis of European modernity for the examination of these other civilizations. Because a critical perspective is needed, we have attempted such an approach, perhaps best illustrated in the consideration of two concepts: civil society and nationalism.

Notions of civil society were proposed and elaborated in different European contexts in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, not least within the intellectual tradition of what came to be termed the Scottish Enlightenment. It was also considered earlier by scholars such as Pufendorf. The contemporary social scientific revival of interest has been largely, and somewhat curiously, limited to the rather particular conceptualization of civil society outlined in a continental European setting in the period of transition from absolutist monarchies to nations and states, principally by Hegel. Thus Hegel's own specific definition of civil society has come to form the vision of generations of

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scholars up to the present day. This conception, firmly rooted in German society of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, resembles Wilhelm von Humboldt's thought about the institutional underpinning of intellectual freedom within a modern university. It highlights a concern for the creation of a sphere of autonomy relative to a traditionally interventionist, regulating princely and absolutist "Polizeystaat," a state governed by princely ordinances or policies that could in principle apply to any domain of societal activity. However, an approach like Hegel's has relatively little to say about other types of societies outside or even inside Europe, including Scandinavia, where close interaction between state and society did not preclude a significant influence from the latter on the former. To accommodate these very major differences, we find the concept of public sphere much more useful than the concept of civil society.

The concept of a public sphere implies that there are at least two other spheres from which the public sphere is more or less institutionally and culturally differentiated: the official sphere and the private sphere. The public is therefore a sphere located between these two. It is a sphere where collective improvements (the common good) are at stake. While this also holds for the official sphere, in the public sphere this business is carried out by groups that do not belong to the ruler's domain. Rather, the public sphere draws its personnel from the private sphere: it expands and shrinks according to shifting involvements of such personnel, as Albert O. Hirschman has demonstrated with regard to modern capitalist development.[5]

The public sphere is the place of voice rather than of loyalty, to use Hirschman's famous distinction. Its strength depends on its institutional locus—whether it is dispersed or unified, whether it is close to the center or to the periphery. It is based on oral or written communication. Its influence rests on interpretations of the common good vis-à-vis the ruler, on the one hand, and the private sphere, on the other.

The term public sphere therefore denotes the existence of arenas that not only are autonomous from the political order but are also public in the sense that they are accessible to different sectors of society. Such public spheres are constructed through

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several basic processes. The first is one of categorization, which defines and frames a discourse beyond face-to-face interaction. The second process is one of reflexivity, which invites a debate on the problems of the common good, on criteria of inclusion and exclusion, on the permeability of boundaries, and on the recognition of the "other." The third process stabilizes and institutionalizes this sphere. Public spheres tend to develop dynamics of their own, which, while closely related to that of the political arena, are not coterminous with it and are not governed by the dynamics of the latter. The relations between various public spheres and the political arena develop differently in every society—not necessarily as they did in early modern Europe, through direct participation, be it by corporate bodies or through a more or less restricted suffrage.

Even this broad definition of the public sphere seems to be culturally bound. As Benjamin Schwartz once remarked in a rejoinder to Hannah Arendt's distinction between the public and private, a number of important societies including the Chinese "had long done quite well without any conception at all of the public as distinct from the private good." Indeed, the notion of private interests as distinct from public interests, especially the idea that private interests could serve as a solid base for the pursuit of public interests, seems to be European. It is tied to a legal tradition that endows the individual with subjective rights, an economic tradition that relies on the rational pursuit of self-interests, and an institutional tradition that emphasizes the separation between state and civil society.

Since Jürgen Habermas's *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, which gained wide recognition after the collapse of the Soviet Empire and the inauguration of the concept of civil society as a norm for Middle and East European societal reconstruction, the concepts of public sphere and civil society have been combined.[6] But these concepts should not be joined, for civil society is not an unequivocal term. In German the term carries a double meaning. It is synonymous with bourgeois society (*bürgerliche Gesellschaft*) as it was used in the philosophical, legal, and political discourse throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and then appropriated and transformed by Hegel, at which point it entered into the Marxian discourse.

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(The Greek distinction between *oikos* and *polis*, later the Latin distinction between *societas domestica* and *societas civilis*, was used throughout the centuries. It is only with Hegel that *societas civilis* came to be equated with the separation of the modern state and civil society as bourgeois society.) Civil society is synonymous also with the phrase "society of citizens" (*Bürgergesellschaft*), which is essentially its current use. The first meaning connotes institutions such as private property and contract that are connected with economic liberties, and it is therefore related to economic modernization, which leads to rational capitalism in Max Weber's sense. The second meaning is associated with political liberties such as freedom of speech and the right to assemble and to build associations and organizations in order to influence the political process. It is therefore related to political modernization that leads to participatory democracy. Both meanings overlap, and it is not always clear which one is at stake. Furthermore, and this is the main conclusion we infer from this discussion, a civil society entails a public sphere, but not every public sphere involves a civil society, whether of the economic or political variety.

To repeat, we do not want to impose European patterns on other civilizations. However, we expect that in every civilization with some complexity and literacy a public sphere will emerge, but not necessarily of the civil society type. It must be regarded as a sphere *between* the official and the private, and one that expands and shrinks according to the shifting involvement of the carrier strata that are not part of the rulership.

This can be illustrated with China and Japan. China experienced a major cultural breakthrough during the so-called axial-age period (*Achsenzeit*), whereas Japan did not.[7] In both cases, however, a public sphere can be detected, although in neither case one that would resemble the European type, that is, a public sphere of the civil society type.

In imperial China three different domains can be identified in which political action and reaction take place: *guan*, *gong*, and *si*. *Guan* is the sphere of bureaucratic engagement, *gong* the sphere open to all, and *si* the sphere of self-interests invading the public domains. According to our model, *guan* can be identified as the official sphere, *gong* as the public sphere, and *si* as the

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private sphere. It is noteworthy that *si* is denigrated, regarded as detrimental to the pursuit of the common good, which has its locus in *guan* and *gong* rather than in *si*. The institutional backbones of *gong* are the academies and its carriers the literati, who existed in great numbers in imperial China. Those who passed the examination system always strove to become members of the official sphere, but because of the limited availability of bureaucratic positions many were unable to acquire that status. We encounter shifting involvements of these literati according to changes in the political constellations, as Frederic Wakeman demonstrates in his essay in this volume. But these shifting involvements do not lead to a greater regard for the private sphere or to a public sphere of the civil society type.

In Tokugawa Japan the concept of *kokka* signifies the union of people and territory and the unity of state and society. It is a holistic concept that seems to run counter to a conceptual and institutional differentiation between the respective spheres. However, even this holistic concept yields such differentiation. As Mary Elizabeth Berry demonstrates in this volume, there are two cleavages within *kokko*: *Kan* and *min* on the one hand, *ko* and *shi* on the other. The first break translates into official and nonofficial, the second into public and private or social and nonsocial. Again, the differentiation between official, public, and private emerges at least in rudimentary form. As in the case of China, the private is disparaged. And the public sphere, which is institutionalized as *kogi*, gains momentum when the samurai, as peacetime warriors without any practical military function, become a learned elite in oversupply.

Another illustration can be taken from Islam. Here the law, the *waqf* (the charitable family foundations), and the Sufi orders constituted the very dynamic public arenas that were relatively independent of political rulership.

VII.

Similar considerations apply to nationalism. No matter how interesting and pressing the problems of nationalism might be in Eastern Europe, in the communal conflict and strife in India, or in civil wars in several African states, the issues of nationhood

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and nationalism appear rather limited in scholarly terms if not seen against the backdrop of national identity being just one construction of collective identity, and in historical terms a rather late and by no means all-pervasive one. It is hardly an exaggeration to state that most theories of national identity and nationalism represent a restricted scholarly agenda, which should be replaced by one that is able to locate these forms of identity within a range of possible types of collective identity.

Many of the recent theories of nationalism veer between viewing it as either a continual manifestation of primordiality or as an "imagined" community that developed in modern times only in response to the expansion of capitalism, industrialism, and imperialism. By contrast, we assume that collective identities in general are not naturally given but culturally constructed, and that such construction has always constituted a basic dimension of the constitution of society. This approach also goes against the implicit assumptions of most classical sociological and anthropological positions—that such construction is ephemeral or secondary to power or economic relations.

In our view, collective identities are constituted through the cultural construction of boundaries, which allows a distinction to be made between those who belong and those who do not. Maintaining boundaries, however, requires ongoing interpretive efforts through which solidarity and trust are created among the members of the collectivity. A central aspect of such construction is the promulgation and definition of the attribute of "similarity" among its members. Such a distinction also poses the problem of how to manage the crossing of the established boundaries. The stranger can become a member, and a member a stranger. Religious conversion and excommunication represent obvious illustrations of these possibilities.

The construction of collective identities is influenced or shaped by codes through which ontological or cosmological premises and conceptions of social order prevalent in a society influence the specification of the definition of the major arenas. The major codes of the construction of collective identity are primordiality, civility, and sacredness. Primordiality focuses on gender, generation, kinship, territory, language, and race for constructing and reinforcing the distinction between inside and outside, which is

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then perceived as naturally given. Civility focuses on implicit or explicit rules of conduct, traditions, and social routines. These are regarded as the core of the collectivity. Sacredness links the boundary between "us and them," not to natural conditions, but to the relation of the collective subject to the transcendental, be it defined as God, reason, progress, or rationality.

Such construction of collective identities has been effected in all societies by the interaction between special social actors. It has been continuously occurring in different historical settings, including the axial and nonaxial civilizations like Japan.[8] Developing universal "religious" collective identities as distinct from political and "primordial" ones, however, was the achievement of the axial civilizations. Throughout the history of these civilizations, the continual changes in the composition of the elite gave rise to very important changes in the constitution of collective identities. In many of these civilizations one of the most important of these developments is connected with the transformation of more ecumenical conceptions into vernacular ones. Outside Europe, this happened not during the period from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries but sometimes much earlier and sometimes much later.

VIII.

Our analysis of the institutionalization of public spheres and the construction of collective identities is meant to provide some clues as to the applicability of Western social scientific concepts to non-Western society. We cannot avoid Western concepts, but we can make them flexible, so to speak, through differentiation and contextualization. Such an attempt entails developing diverse perspectives in order to analyze these civilizations and encourage an intercultural dialogue between them.

Thus the use of concepts like primordial, civil, and sacred as components of collective identities is helpful as long as we do not presume that the way in which these components were made up and combined in Europe constitutes the evaluative yardstick for other modernizing civilizations and societies. The construction of collective identities can develop in many different directions depending, among other factors, on the major symbols

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available, especially the relative importance of religious, ideological, primordial, and historical components among those symbols; the conception of the political order and the relation between the political order to other societal orders; the conception of political authority and its accountability; the character of the public sphere; the conception of the subject; and the modes of center-periphery relations.

If we compare modern civilizations using such concepts as political order, collective identity, and public sphere, we need to avoid the pitfalls of both Western- and Eastern-centeredness. Such a fallacious position can be found, for instance, in the Nihonjinron literature, with its claims about the incomparable uniqueness of Japan. We cannot identify uniqueness without making some comparisons. For instance, there is the attitude of "inverted orientalism," which can sometimes be found among the more critical Western and Japanese scholars. Such "inverted orientalism" developed in reaction to the Nihonjinron literature. It gave rise to the denial of the validity of certain Japanese categories of thought as applied to the analysis of Japanese historical and contemporary experience. Such an approach turns out to be rather paradoxical, as it goes against the exploration of those categories emphasized by the critics of the "orientalist" approach.

The existence of debates around these problems attests to the intricacies of comparative research. The root of these problems lies not only in the fact that, at least until recently, most of the scholars who addressed these problems came from the West but also in that this type of research has developed almost entirely—Ibn Khaldun not withstanding—as part of the Western modern discourse. The adoption of various critical stances toward the earlier "orientalist" literature—in the West, in India, in Japan, and elsewhere—has remained part of this discourse, and the continuous reconstruction of this discourse by intellectuals in non-Western countries has greatly transformed it. But for the most part these interventions did not go beyond the confines of this discourse.

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IX.

Let us summarize the main thrust of our comparative endeavor. We are pursuing two lines of reasoning: one developmental, the other structural, institutional, and cultural. Both are interconnected. In a developmental perspective, we are interested in the transformation of the lineage or stratum-based types of rulership, and especially empires, into (modern) states and nations, as nation-states or as nations encompassing states (or vice versa). Empires emerging out of this constellation can be termed nation-based empires. From structural, institutional, and cultural perspectives, we are interested in the interrelationship between the types of rulership or political order, the types of public spheres, and the types of collective identities. It is our contention that these elements cannot be reduced to each other, that they vary independently of each other but are nevertheless interrelated in a nonrandom manner. At the very least, we expect elective affinities between them.

With the transition from empires to states and nations the political order changes greatly. A state apparatus emerges, based on a written or unwritten constitution and the rule of law, with a constitutional division of powers; a political leadership responsible to the people; an administration separated from the means of administration and bound to general laws; a participation of the public-at-large in the political process, especially through universal suffrage and intermediate organizations such as parties and interest groups; and a sphere of discretion for every individual, who is regarded as a citizen rather than as a subject. Such a political order can be said to have achieved the relative monopoly of legitimate physical force executed within the boundaries of a clearly delineated territory. The nation-state is a territorial state in the strictest sense of the term. Collective identities, culturally construed, are centered around national identities, whether couched primarily in primordial, civic, or sacred terms, or in a combination thereof (i.e., the ethnic nation, *Volksnation*; the cultural nation, *Kulturnation*; the legal nation, *Staatsbürgernation*). Part and parcel of such a constellation is the institutionalizing of a relatively autonomous public sphere impinging on the state. This description can be regarded as an

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ideal type. It is used in comparative perspective as a point of departure and as a heuristic yardstick—to identify deviance, not deficiency—leading to an analysis from within that then accounts for the internal dynamics peculiar to a civilization. The essays that follow are attempts to make good on this approach.

ENDNOTES

[1]This introduction is partly based on a research proposal by Shmuel N. Eisenstadt, Wolfgang Schluchter, and Björn Wittrock entitled "Collective Identity, Public Sphere, and Political Order: Cultural Foundations and the Formation of Contemporary Societies."

[2]Werner Sombart, *Why Is There No Socialism in the United States?* (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1976).

[3]Marshall G. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1974); Marshall G. Hodgson, *Rethinking World History,* ed. E. Burke III (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

[4]Max Weber, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie,* 3 vol. (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1920).

[5]Albert O. Hirschman, *Shifting Involvement: Private Interest and Public Action* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1982), 63; Albert O. Hirschman, *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty: Responses to Decline in Firms, Organizations, and States* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970).

[6]Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society,* trans. Thomas Burger and Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1989).

[7]This project began in the eighties in Jerusalem, continued in Bad Homburg, and was concretized through a series of conferences on the origins of the axial age (*Achsenzeit*). See Shmuel N. Eisenstadt, ed., *Kulturen der Achsenzeit,* 3 vols. (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1992); Shmuel N. Eisenstadt, ed., *The Origins and Diversity of Axial Age Civilizations* (New York: SUNY Press, 1986); and Shmuel N. Eisenstadt, "The Axial Age: The Emergence of Transcendental Visions and the Rise of Clerics," *European Journal of Sociology* 23 (2) (1982): 294–314. A similar enterprise, related to Max Weber's comparative studies, was organized by Wolfgang Schluchter during the eighties. See Wolfgang Schluchter, *Paradoxes of Modernity: Culture and Conduct in the Theory of Max Weber,* trans. Neil Solomon (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1996); and Wolfgang Schluchter, *Rationalism, Religion, and Domination: A Weberian Perspective,* trans. Neil Solomon (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1989).

[8]Shmuel N. Eisenstadt, *Japanese Civilization: A Comparative View* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

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Björn Wittrock

Early Modernities: Varieties and Transitions

TODAY IT MAY SEEM OBVIOUS that societies across the globe exhibit largely similar features, yet differ so deeply that any traveler cannot help noticing clear cultural differences between them. Given the self-evident phenomenon of a multiplicity of modernities, it is easy to forget that our conceptual understanding of the modern world, elaborated by the social and human sciences and in public debates, tends to be premised (if often tacitly so) on the opposite conception—that modernization is a process of the global diffusion of Western civilization and its key institutions. Social scientists have long tended to describe the emergence of this modern world as a dual revolution—in technological and economic practices, resulting in the Industrial Revolution, and in political practices of democracy and demands for popular participation, powerfully manifested in the French and American revolutions of the late eighteenth century.[1] Key categories used to describe the emergence of this modern world arise overwhelmingly against the backdrop of the peculiarly European path to modernity. This is equally true of such broad notions as the nation-state or the constitutional republic, and of such mediating concepts as the public sphere and civil society.

In historical perspective this is not surprising. After all, the social sciences emerged as a form of reflection on the momentous transformations of Western societies during the processes of industrialization, urbanization, and political change in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. These transforma-

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tions were often believed to entail an irreversible process of change, ushering in a world of modernity characterized by both economic growth and a continuous sense of crisis. Captured vividly in the writings of authors as different as Hegel, Saint-Simon, and, later, Marx, Tönnies, Weber, and Durkheim, this image was formulated most elegantly—and pessimistically—by a French aristocrat in the middle of the nineteenth century. When Alexis de Tocqueville wrote his memoirs some two decades after the journey to America that was destined to assure him lasting fame, he confessed how deeply mistaken he had been in thinking that the sea change in social and political order inherent in the French Revolution had already come to an end in 1830.

Today, however, as we look back at the two centuries in which the social institutions were emblematic of modernity—a democratic nation-state, a liberal market economy, and science pursued in the research-oriented university—we see that they have spread as models, if not always as realities, from their place of origin in Europe to virtually all countries across the globe. In the process, however, they have often been so profoundly transformed as to render a belief in one single homogenous modernity hopelessly naive. Yet we will only be disappointed if we turn to the social and human sciences for ready-made conceptual tools that would enable an understanding of the way in which, over long periods of time, the foundations of the multiple cultural programs of modernity were formed across different civilizations.

There are at least three basic reasons for this scholarly neglect. First, for a long time in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries modernization seemed synonymous with Westernization. Whether at home or abroad, the champions and critics of triumphant European and American economic, political, and cultural expansion and growth showed little inclination to question the identification of modernity with the development and diffusion of the cultural program of one specific civilization.

Second, there was in the nineteenth century (and is today) a relative neglect among scholars not only of changes in political and economic institutions but of intellectual and cultural processes that serve to underpin and make meaningful—indeed, often to constitute—the key categories of political and institu-

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tional change. Only in recent years have scholars worked systematically to map the deep-seated intellectual shift at the turn of the eighteenth century, now sometimes understood as not only a second scientific revolution but a more wide-ranging cultural and intellectual shift as well. We are only starting to appreciate the extent to which our more familiar notions of societal order—even the very concepts of society, collective identity, and forms of human agency—were shaped in the course of that process of intellectual and institutional transformation.[2]

Third, the fact that many of the key institutional features of the modern age emerged at the turn of the eighteenth century in dramatic ruptures with traditional forms of political and social order has tended to blunt interest in, and hence inquiries into, much longer waves of change in the different cultural programs of modernity. Why should scholars pay attention to the different types of public spheres in the China of the Ming dynasty, in the Japan of the Tokugawa shogunate, or in pre-Enlightenment Europe if these differences are all equally irrelevant to the dramatic breakthrough and global diffusion of nineteenth-century models of economic and political order in Europe and the United States?

The essays in this issue of *Dædalus* represent a sustained effort to overcome these limitations, presenting empirical materials that make it possible to think comparatively and historically about the ways in which different modernities took shape in cultural and institutional terms. Thus the first limitation noted above is transcended here by the fact that the essays address cultural and political practices not only from outside the European and American spheres but also over long periods of time in which the internal dynamics of these other civilizations become visible.

The second limitation—the relatively little attention that institutional analysis has paid to processes making societal life meaningful and intelligible in cultural terms—is tackled here by a focus on two key concepts that highlight precisely those processes in which cultural and political practices meet: collective identity and public sphere. By focusing on the generic concept of collective identity rather than nationhood or citizenship, it is possible to describe a multiplicity of forms of relations between human beings and political order while avoiding the

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preoccupation with forms of political order that became prevalent, if not predominant, in Western Europe from the late eighteenth century onwards. Indeed, it might even be argued, following Sanjay Subrahmanyam, that "the exclusive focus on the emergence of the nation-state and the ideologies that go under the name of 'nationalism' has served to obscure" a number of important shifts in the formation of early modern societies. This is as true of Western and Central Asia, or China and Japan, as it is of Europe, East and West.

By bringing the notion of the public sphere into focus, we can better understand those processes in which the dominant form of political and cultural order was made meaningful to its members, and by which its potentials were deliberated and its structure legitimated and challenged. Thus a basic premise of all the essays is that only by looking at these key features of a society from a wide comparative and historical perspective—their forms of collective identity, and especially their modes of mediating in the public sphere between subjects and rulers, citizens and governments—can we fully appreciate the factors distinguishing between different modernities.

Rather than dwell on these points in the abstract, I shall discuss how the essays suggest we might rethink the historical formation of modern political and social institutions. Significantly, we begin by noting that the perspective found here is not just the vantage point of Europe, with its assumption of a global process of diffusion; rather, an effort is made to trace connecting principles and processes across civilizations. Thus, as argued forcefully by Sheldon Pollock, in so wide a comparative perspective the whole period from the twelfth century onwards may be seen as involving a secular shift from a series of transnational cultural "ecumenes" to vernacular cultural orders, ushering in the modern nation-state as the archetypal political order of modernity.

In the case of Europe, there are three key transitions that have to be taken into account in the standard historical interpretation. First, a bifurcation of political and religious authority emerged in the Middle Ages, laying the foundations of the specific European heritage of coexistence among of a plurality of political, religious, and social allegiances. National monarchies

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and royal absolutism then emerged, coterminous with the weakening of Christendom as a cohesive, all-encompassing culture with the turmoil of devastating religious civil wars. Finally came the overthrow of these regimes and their replacement by nation-states and constitutional republics.

It is the processes bringing about this last transformation that form the focus of this issue. That transition marks the breakthrough of a new type of political order and the replacement of earlier forms of political identities, understood in terms of a ruler and subjects, by notions of compatriots and citizens. This third transition is normally seen as made possible by the emergence of a public sphere, relying on print media and marked by the emergence of new groupings of intellectuals at least partly outside the sway of royal patronage and prerogatives, reaching out to wider publics and debating the proper course of policies and forms of ruling. Thus these new public spheres are the arenas in which new collective identities are forged and new forms of political and cultural order made possible.

THE THREE TRANSITIONS OF EARLY MODERN SOCIETIES

In the widest possible perspective—encompassing developments in Eurasia in the period from the twelfth century onwards—it may appear as though a secular shift takes place across a period of several centuries. There is a slow but deep change from transnational, unifying cultures and political orders to growing vernacular cultures and more limited political orders ushering in the late-eighteenth- and nineteenth-century projects of constructing new types of correspondence between vernacular culture and political order within the framework of a nation-state.

In the case of Western Europe in the early and high medieval period, it is possible, following a Weberian tradition, to discern four interconnected processes in this formative period of the Western historical trajectory.[3] First there was the emergence of what was ultimately revealed as an irreversible process of separation of religious and secular power. Neither pope nor emperor could secure the supremacy necessary to establish absolute civil and ecclesial rule (or, as in Orthodox Christendom, a caesaropapistic tradition of imperial rule). Second, the so-called Feudal

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Revolution entailed not only a hierarchical social order but also a tradition of recognized quasi-legal rights and obligations that exerted a series of mutually binding relationships in society. These relationships were at least potentially open for adjudication in legal arenas, such as the medieval parliaments or in local and regional legal assemblies.

Third, the growing role of cities in medieval Europe—sometimes referred to as the Urban Revolution—not only entailed an increase in commercial and handicraft activities; it also meant that forms of legally regulated and recognized societal positions (in the forms of guilds) were created in the towns and cities of Europe. Combined with periods of temporal weakness of Imperial rule, it also gave rise—not least for purposes of self-defense—to a tradition of urban self-government and city republicanism. Finally, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries an intellectual revolution led primarily to the rediscovery of classical scholarship and the introduction of Aristotelian thinking into scholasticism. More generally, but no less significantly, this revolution led to the emergence of a greater degree of philosophical engagement with questions of social and political order, expanding the public debate to an extent comparable only to what Karl Jaspers described in the transition from mythological to philosophical thinking in the civilizations of the Eastern Mediterranean area, the Indian subcontinent, and East Asia in the so-called axial age of the centuries around 500 B.C.E.[4]

The institutional side of the intellectual revolution of the Middle Ages was manifested both in the birth of the European universities and in the dramatic diffusion of monastic orders across the European land mass. The rise of universities was of course largely dependent on the rise of urbanization. However, it also meant that new fora were established in which the meaning of legal relations inherent in the Feudal Revolution could be interpreted and elaborated. Recently, scholars have argued that the combination of a large number of universities and other scholarly centers with the plurality of independent or semi-independent city republics and princely political entities—and the absence of a single dominant, all-embracing political order—was a major source of intellectual innovation, crucial for the later rise of Western Europe to global preeminence.[5]

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Of key importance to the theme of this volume is the fact that different collective identities, as well as the questions of rights and obligations, all presumed the existence of public spheres where claims and counterclaims could be asserted and negotiated, and where the range of princely and imperial power could be questioned and contested. Modern political philosophy and sociology have come to focus on the eighteenth-century emergence in Europe of a specific type of public sphere based on print media and new types of intellectuals outside of the purview of royal patronage. In the words of Shmuel N. Eisenstadt and Wolfgang Schluchter, a public sphere is "located between the official and the private sphere. It is a sphere where collective improvements, the common good, are at stake. . . . The term public sphere therefore denotes the existence of arenas that are not only autonomous from the political order, but are also public in the sense that they are accessible to different sectors of society."

We sometimes tend to forget that there existed a whole range of early modern public spheres in Europe. They included parliamentary assemblies, such as the Spanish *Cortes* described here by Víctor Pérez-Díaz, as well as local politico-judicial ones such as the institution of *thing*, the local and regional legal-political assemblies in Scandinavia.[6] Furthermore, we find throughout early modern Europe a whole range of political or political-literary commentators and university scholars who intervened in public debates on the nature of rulership and legitimacy of power. Again, Pérez-Díaz has forcefully called our attention to the prominent public roles played by the *arbitristas* in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Spain and by university scholars, not least from the old university of Salamanca, as well as by literary authors in Spain and the rest of Europe.

Thus, the first transition in Europe discussed here concerns the emergence of institutional pluralism in the wake of the Papal, the Feudal, the Urban, and the Intellectual Revolutions of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The second transition is to a new form of political order—that of national monarchies and royal absolutism in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. If the Holy Roman Empire had long ceased to be an effective and coherent political entity, by the late sixteenth century the city

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republics were equally unable to defend their independence in the face of national monarchies that had capitalized upon the breakup of monastic orders and the ecumenical church to secure a strong financial basis. With the elaboration of the concept of divine rule, the national monarchies followed and developed the example of the Empire in drawing on religious ideas of a monarch ultimately depending on divine grace for legitimacy. To be sure, the rulers of these states were able to arrogate for themselves a degree of control over the religious and cultural life of their domains far greater than had been enjoyed by feudal lords in the medieval period. In intellectual terms, however, European scholars and authors continued to use the notion of empire as a basic metaphor at least until the mid-seventeenth century—if they did not at the same time share Comenius's dream of a new transnational cultural and political ecumene in Europe as a way out of the seemingly endless bloodshed of religious warfare. As a consequence, the cultural and administrative needs of the new national monarchies tended to favor a gradual but irreversible process displacing the language of universality in the West—Latin—with the use of vernacular languages, first for administrative purposes but later for all kinds of political and cultural and (in the Protestant parts of Europe) religious purposes. This process, which had its roots in the medieval period, was intensified in the sixteenth century and would not be completed until the absolutist regimes themselves were replaced with modern nation-states at the end of the eighteenth century.

In social and political terms, the new national monarchies, with their guilds, estates, courts, and parliaments, retained many elements of a feudal society. However, many of these elements were gradually reduced in importance if not altogether suppressed. Similarly, the public debates on religion, politics, and culture so prominent during the period of the Reformation became constrained and regulated.[7] In many cases, the very form of public discourse changed. Thus many scholars have pointed to the fact that the intense debate in political and legal discourse in late-sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century France gradually withered away with the growing power of royal absolutism, to be replaced by legal-administrative doctrines on the one hand

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and by a kind of political discourse couched in literary and artistic form on the other—from La Rochefoucauld's fables onwards.[8] A careful and politically sensitive reading of literary texts from other countries in the same period could reveal new arenas and media of political and public discourse largely overlooked by traditional political philosophy.

Clearly, this second transition marked a sea change in the configuration of political orders, public spheres, and collective identities. It meant that a kind of limited universalism, or local cosmopolitanism (to use Pollock's expression), was instituted in both political and cultural terms. Pérez-Díaz characterizes this transition, following Oakeshott, as one in which the powerful new national monarchies evolve from a loosely regulated form of civil association, a "nomocratic state" of the medieval type, to a state capable of resource mobilization for the sake of realizing a historical mission—a "teleocratic state." We may also remark on the growing role of vernacular languages as the medium of these "teleocratic" national monarchies. Once set in motion in a state already premised on the religious-cultural homogeneity of its population, such a process lacks only the replacement of the king with the people as the proper locus of sovereignty for the modern nation-state to become a real possibility.

EARLY MODERN EURASIA: THE THREE TRANSITIONS IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

If the perspective is widened to include the experiences of civilizations outside of Europe, categories such as state and public sphere, not to speak of civil society or nationhood, must be reexamined. This is important, but in a sense also obvious. Much less obvious is the argument made in some recent contributions to historical scholarship that suggest the usefulness of "early modern" as a category to describe developments not only in Europe but across Eurasia, in the period from the middle of the fourteenth century through the eighteenth century.[9] Indeed, classical and recent scholarship in the Weberian tradition, as well as individual contributions to this issue, suggest that it might be fruitful to extend this perspective even further back so as to include the momentous transformations of the twelfth and

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thirteenth centuries.[10] Thus, as argued here by Frederic Wakeman, the so-called neo-Confucian Revival of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries is a period of philosophical engagement equal in importance to the philosophical and institutional struggles of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Similarly, in another Asian case, it is in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries that the formative features of Japanese feudalism emerge and basic cultural codes and cleavages take shape.[11] Among the most fundamental of these characteristics, and in significant contrast to European feudalism, were the comparatively larger distance between social strata—between the lords and the samurai at large, and between peasants and the higher samurai; the continued dependence of the lords (the *daimyo*) on the *bakufu*, the central government of the shogun; and the relative lack of arenas of adjudication and contestation where rights and obligations could be asserted in the face of government.

In his classic study of feudal society, Marc Bloch argues that a distinctive feature of feudalism in Japan was the absence of contractual relationships. Rather than acting in concert with one or several lords (as in Europe), in Japan feudal relationships entailed a form of submission to one and only one lord.[12] Furthermore, the emperor himself was not at the peak of the feudal pyramid; he was instead located outside the system of feudal arrangements, providing the ultimate legitimacy for the entire cultural and societal order by mediating between the divine realm and the people of Japan at large.[13] There was, then, both a fundamental bifurcation and a deep mutual dependence between the symbolic cultural-legitimating role of the emperor and the more immediately political role of the shogun and its central government. This divide became formative not only for lines of conflict and contestation but also for the shaping and legitimation of the most basic social ties—specifically for the transition from a clan-based system of social ties to the so-called *ie* system, which depended in the last instance on the symbolic legitimation of the emperor for its continued viability and legitimacy.

Clearly, these experiences are comparable to yet radically different from those of Europe, where in the course of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the specific European heritage took the shape of a plurality of coexisting political, social, and cultural

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entities, none of which could establish hegemonic claims to collective allegiances. Indeed, it is in this European context—the half-private, half-official spaces the guilds created—that the multiplicity of public spheres emerged. Here, representatives of different estates sought to establish the substance and scope of their respective legal claims vis-à-vis each other and the princely rulers; universities and their scholars transcended the boundaries of guild-like corporations and became participants in an early modern public sphere. Here, indeed, early modern governments took form, with their characteristic tripartite division between legal-parliamentary entities, a fiscal administration in the form of some kind of exchequer, and a princely council, with the extent of parliamentary power determining whether this council remained a loose private addition to the household of the ruler or an emerging collegial cabinet.[14]

A key question for comparative historical scholarship is to understand the processes that fractured this cultural ecumene and ushered in at least a century and a half of religious wars, bloodier and more devastating in their consequences than anything Europe experienced until the middle of the present century. Clearly, in light of the essays in this issue, and particularly those by Pollock and Subrahmanyam, some of the standard explanations do not suffice to account for this. It is not sufficient simply to refer to the inability of the papacy or of the Holy Roman Empire to enforce civil peace throughout the center of the European continent. Nor is it enough to point out that this empire existed in a twilight zone between symbolic and institutional reality, a shadow of a perpetual dream.

It may be tantalizing to argue, as Alexander Woodside does here, by associating the continuation of cultural unity and imperial rule with the absence of devastating religious wars in China, juxtaposing the Middle Kingdom's tranquility and the catastrophic experiences of Europe in the same period. However, Japan, too, had no experience of religious civil wars, despite the coexistence of widely different strands of thought even within the Buddhist tradition—to say nothing of the inextricable relationship between Buddhism and Shintoism already established by then. Thus, the ability (or rather, the inability) of the emperor to enforce social peace in the fourteenth, fifteenth,

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and sixteenth centuries certainly suggests that imperial weakness is at best a partial explanation for the catastrophic turn of events in Europe.

The case of the Indian subcontinent makes clear that the argument has to be pursued even further. Whatever role the reality and imagination of empire may have played in the constitution of world religions in the period betwen 200 B.C. and A.D. 200—as argued by Jaspers in his classic work[15]—in India's case a millennium passed between the disappearance of the last great empires (circa A.D. 600–800) and the colonial encounter (the case of the Mughals excepted). During this period, not only was there no empire, but even the very notion of something that may reasonably be termed a state seems, as Pollock notes in his essay, to have been fragile at best. Yet there was a cosmopolitan cultural ecumene existing side by side with a growing expression of vernacular culture that existed, as in Europe, in literary form. By itself this did not bring about anything remotely reminiscent of national monarchies, much less of nation-states.

The second transition to the limited universalism of national monarchies in Europe may be seen as a response to the crisis of the earlier societal order of extreme pluralism and contestation.[16] However, as is clearly shown by the contributions to this issue, the historical experiences of China, Japan, and the Indian subcontinent make it necessary to question not only the use of well-established individual concepts when applied to phenomena in the European context ("civil society" and "public sphere," for example) but also more general assumptions about the nature of linkages between social, cultural, and political phenomena.

In both China and Japan the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were, as in Europe, periods of intellectual engagement with political contestation. In both cases the end result was a strengthening of central political order and the incorporation of nascent public spheres into official ones controlled by the central political order. Thus, as argued here by Wakeman, the surge of philosophical activity in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century China was characterized by an orientation towards praxis; it became entrenched in a variety of academies, most prominently the so-called Donglin Academy. Furthermore, it became linked to communitarian associations, as well as to

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economic interests that profited from the dramatic increase in international and intercontinental commerce; as such, it came to serve as a forum for criticism of conservatism and corruption at the imperial court. Even after the suppression of both this movement and other elements of the emerging public sphere, opposition to the central political court was carried on in other forms among mandarin literati. For all the differences and divergence between them, it is difficult not to think of the contemporaneous literary and religious (and often aristocratic) discourse in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century France that was sometimes the only permissible form for a critical discourse on the ever-growing power of royal absolutism.

In the case of Japan, the long period of strife and civil war ended with the establishment of the Tokugawa shogunate in the second half of the sixteenth century. As in China and Europe, both the sources of divisive conflict and the means of overcoming it—by strengthening centralized political power—were domestic. However, in all three cases the constellation of domestic conflict was clearly related to the interconnectedness of their respective cultures to what was for the first time a truly global economic order; trade between Europe and the Americas deeply affected East Asian developments. The Tokugawa shogunate is associated with a policy of isolationism and an emphasis on, not to say creation and imposition of, cultural and social codes of tradition—in the midst of a society undergoing rapid change, in which rural and feudal values were extolled while a vibrant urban life was becoming ever more prominent in economic, if not political, terms.

Due precisely to those features that mark the difference between the West European type of feudal society and Japanese feudalism, the Tokugawa shogunate, while never being fully able to dispense with the culturally symbolic role of the Emperor, still could exert a degree of centralized control of society unmatched by even the most absolutist European monarchy in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Precisely because of these features the Tokugawa shogunate may also be described as a type of feudal absolutism higher in degree than European absolutist regimes.

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It is true that absolutism in Europe retained many of its social features as well as some of its political and public features, such as parliamentary institutions composed of estates, found not only in England, Holland, and Sweden but even at the height of absolutism in Prussia. However, national monarchies and royal absolutism also meant the abolition of a range of institutional features and arenas that had emerged during the Feudal and Urban Revolutions of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. It was only with the French Revolution and the transition to what might be termed high modernity at the turn of the eighteenth century that the concept of feudalism—rather than just the notion of feudal rights or relations—was coined to critically capture a range of phenomena, such that "feudalism" became intimately linked with royal absolutism and despotism in radical public debate.[17]

This usage, which can be found to some extent in Hegel and to a much greater extent among French radicals, not to speak of Marx, thus tends to blur the fact that the European national monarchies had in fact greatly curtailed feudal rights and institutions. In Japan, by contrast, the Tokugawa shogunate was both more interventionist and more effective in terms of central political control than even the most interventionist police state in Europe—as was also the eighteenth-century Qianlong imperial regime in China. Yet the Tokugawa shogunate also did far less damage to traditional feudal features in social and cultural terms. Rather, as an efficient means to safeguard social peace, it tended to emphasize, maybe even reinvent, such features in Japanese society. Ironically, despite its focus on protecting and isolating Japanese civilization, both the establishment of the Tokugawa shogunate in the 1560s and its eventual demise three centuries later were intimately related, as Mary Elizabeth Berry notes, to changes in international trade and politics. Nor did this emphasis exclude a range of modes for expressing typical features of early modern civilization in Japan—which, as with Europe, encompassed such interests as imagining spatial representations in maps, travel guides, and other forms.[18]

The third transition, finally, is the upheaval that marks the break with traditional society and the creation, if in rudimentary form, of those macrosocietal institutions that have come to be

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associated with the era of high modernity in the course of the last two hundred years. Thus in the wake of the French and American Revolutions a modern state took form in which older conceptions of relationships between a princely ruler and his subjects were replaced by collective notions of citizens and compatriots, whereby the nation-state and the constitutional democracy emerged as the archetypal form of modern political order. Similarly, a constrained mercantilist economy was replaced with the idea, and increasingly the reality, of a free market and free trade. In the area of culture and scholarship, royal patronage was replaced in the nineteenth century by activity in a genuinely open public sphere, in which universities rather than royal academies and aristocratic salons became the proper home of intellectual activity, first in Europe and eventually in all other industrializing parts of the world from California in the West to Japan in the East. In turn, research-oriented universities and polytechnics became in the latter half of the nineteenth century ever more important for economic and technological innovation and economic growth, and ever more closely reviewed and generously supported by national governments.[19]

This third transition, the real breakthrough to high modernity, thus occurred in Europe in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries; but its features came, as shown by the contributions to this issue, to fundamentally characterize developments even in faraway countries such as China and Japan during that same period. It was manifested in the emergence, perhaps for the first time, of genuinely public spheres, in contrast to the officially sanctioned and limited spheres of central bureaucratic order. In Europe, the notion of a kingdom constituting almost a kind of private realm for the ruler had at times in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries been common in absolutist regimes. In the course of the eighteenth century, however, the official institutions of the state and their activities became ever more autonomous of the private realm of the princely ruler, even in the most absolutist European states.[20] Such a notion was made irretrievably obsolete in the wake of the momentous transformations that followed the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars.

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CULTURAL CHANGE AND MULTIPLE MODERNITIES

The institutional transformations occurred against the backdrop of intense debates, deliberations, reflections, and intellectual engagement in efforts to understand a changing societal reality and to locate the role of human beings in its processes. Philosophical reasoning became reflexive in the sense that it was directly engaged with issues of greatest public concern, and strove to exert influence on deliberations about these issues. This quality of reflexivity was directly related to what might be termed "historicality" or "temporalization"; that is to say, historical reasoning became an integral part of the intellectual and institutional transition. Even abstract reason itself became historicized in early-nineteenth-century philosophy.

At the turn of the eighteenth century there was moreover a dramatic growth of interest in language and linguistic analysis in all domains of human and social science. One profoundly significant result was the emergence of textual and hermeneutic modes of analysis. Another was an interest in the historical development of vernacular languages and their relationships to various collective entities and identities—the notion of a people defined on the basis of a community of users of one particular vernacular language. This development may be seen as the last stage in a very long historical process of vernacularization.

Related to this development is the growth of an interest in the constitution of new collective identities. If collective identities could no longer be taken more or less for granted as the life experiences of the inhabitants of a local community, or reduced to the relationship of obligation and obedience of subjects to their rulers, then even the most basic social categories of identity and belonging were open to doubt, reflection, and reinvention. This development, which to some extent was inherent in the work of eighteenth-century moral philosophers and pamphleteers, became acute in the aftermath of the French Revolution. Categories such as "citizens" and "compatriots" entered the political vocabularies of the time, or fundamentally changed their meaning as part of the reconstitution of collective identities.

Certainly the most basic notions of any social or human science pertain to assumptions about what prompts human

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beings to act and what categories they use to interpret their actions within a broader framework. At the turn of the eighteenth century a reconstitution of these categories occurred, producing concepts that remain at the core of the social and human sciences. These categories have deeply affected public debate and understanding of societal developments, even (perhaps most significantly) the very question of what constitutes a "society." They may be broadly described as an *economic-rationalistic* conception of agency, having roots in the Scottish Enlightenment, with a corresponding view of society as a kind of *compositional collective*; a *statistical-inductive* conception with a view of society as *statistical aggregate*; and a *structural-systemic* notion of society rooted in French debates in the wake of the failure of the revolution to give rise to stable institutional structures. This set of concepts involves a decisive shift from the voluntaristic view of society so prominent in the first stages of the French revolution to one emphasizing structural constraints and conditions. Out of this last notion grew debates about the nature of social structures, not least in the French context, with Emile Durkheim the towering figure in much of what came to characterize the incipient discipline of sociology in the late nineteenth century. Not surprisingly, that project came to emphasize ideas of collective identity and citizenship being based on the existence of links of organic solidarity.

Finally, there emerged a *linguistic-interpretive* view, rooted in German historical-linguistic scholarship, which understood society as an *emergent totality* continuously shaped by human beings becoming aware of their history while actively striving to shape a political order commensurate to that interpretation. Through a variety of interpretations this tradition has been seen to result both in various types of nationalistic collective identities, and in an interest in hermeneutic reasoning and the communicative nature of social interaction. Again, the consequences of this reconceptualization of agency and society were elaborated throughout the nineteenth century, with scholars such as Dilthey and Weber epitomizing the tensions and strains in this tradition. Echoes of these efforts may be discerned in present-day debates about citizenship, nationalism, and history, not least as these themes recur in contemporary debates in Germany.

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The interest in establishing the proper political and geographical basis for a community of language-users or citizens entailed questions of the spatial delimitation of a community. Indeed, the late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century move to high modernity does seem to represent a breakthrough in the conceptualizaton of new forms of spatial representation. This is so for several reasons. There was, as already mentioned, a need to relate notions of collective identity in terms of language use to spatial representations. It is hardly coincidental that one of the most famous poetical-musical expressions of this period, the text of what later became the German national anthem, begins—in the original version—with a rough geographical delimitation of the area that was claimed (albeit never with complete success) as the proper domain of the Fatherland. In this respect, David Howell provides here a fascinating account of the way Japanese constructions of claims to both linguistic uniqueness and a territory served as a focal point in the construction of a deep sense of cultural and collective identity—a conception portrayed as perennial, yet in practical terms open to change over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It was precisely this flexibility that allowed Japan to claim successfully the land and loyalty of the indigenous Ainu on Hokkaido—but also to remove from collective memory, without outward signs of trauma, the fate of other equally claimed or integrated populations lost to Japan in the aftermath of World War II.

In Europe, rulers' preoccupation with the spatial organization of political and social order intensified in the eighteenth century. As part of the overall effort to increase the capacity of the state to amass and mobilize resources, ever more ambitious inventories were being made of the resources of the lands so as to set the stage for their appropriation and use. This resulted in extensive geographical and cartographic activities during that century, often of high artistic value (and, in many European countries, still using Latin as the proper explanatory language for the text and legends of maps). Finally, however, the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are the period in which the notion of some kind of symmetry—between different civilizations in terms of travel, exploration, and exploitation—became replaced with the reality of growing European and American supremacy and domination

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on a global level. The fact that this supremacy occurred at the same point in time that the social sciences emerged as distinct disciplines seems an important source of the relative inability of these scholarly areas to suggest useful terms for understanding the multiplicity of decisively modern societies in our own day that have nonetheless tangible and very different cultural traditions and experiences—so different, indeed, as to render many of the most familiar social-science categories, if not flatly inappropriate, at least in need of rethinking.

AT THE END OF A VERNACULAR MILLENNIUM

Several authors in this issue, most notably Pollock, argue that long-term shifts in collective identities, public spheres, and political orders across the Eurasian land mass in the period from the twelfth century to the nineteenth century involved a slow development from broad, transnational cultures, existing alongside and sometimes challenged by tribal confederacies and city republics and sometimes sustained by imperial political orders, to much more limited cultural and political configurations. Clearly, changes in linguistic practices (such as the rise of vernacular languages) must be seen in the context of larger cultural and institutional changes. In such a context, three periods of transition stand out in Europe during the long period that Pollock terms the "Vernacular Millennium," and which others characterize as a long period of early modern societies reaching back to the mid-twelfth century. In what has here been called the first transition, the broad transnational cultures were complemented by a range of horizontal forms of social organization in the guise of religious orders, guilds, and estates, along with feudal and urban arrangements and representations. Parallel to the ecumenical cultural order, a variety of vernacular literary and administrative practices throve, and where these practices developed new public spheres emerged.

In the second transition, forms of national-absolutist regimes emerged. In Europe these regimes were characterized by a duality. On the one hand, they drew on and intensified the shift towards less encompassing, less culturally transnational orders and sought ways to mobilize resources for governance and con-

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trol within a more limited spatial domain. On the other hand, in this process of vertical organization of social activities, they also constrained and limited the scope of those public spheres and forms of political activity and representation that had emerged during the first transition. This second transition is clearly visible in the European context with the emergence of absolutist national monarchies, as well as such constitutional republican regimes as the Netherlands in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Yet in terms of the effectiveness of social control, European absolutist regimes were far surpassed by both the Tokugawa shogunate in Japan and the early Qing dynasty in China. During this long period of early modern societies in Eurasia, there was a constant flow of cultural, political, and commercial contacts and interactions between different civilizations. In the period ushering in the so-called third transition, this interaction had become so characterized by the increasing domination of European powers that modernization elsewhere appears as little more than examples of a grand process toward modernity begun in the West and diffused over a global range. Simultaneously, long and important processes of interconnected developments in previous centuries tended to be lost from sight.

Today, in a time when the multiplicity of modern societies around the globe is obvious and when the claims to cultural supremacy of any single one of them may appear only a demonstration of arrogance, it is high time to work toward a more comprehensive understanding of the cultural foundations of contemporary societies and the ways in which they have been interconnected to a far greater extent than the nineteenth-century classics of the human and social sciences were prepared to concede. We may witness, if not the end, then at least the beginning of a challenge to the domination of national political and economic orders and their vernacular cultural foundations. However, if we are ever to understand this challenge, a scholarly program of primary importance must be to understand their emergence and evolution during the centuries when the multiplicity of early modern societies emerged and were gradually transformed into the panoply of modern nation-states. The essays of this issue are one modest step in that direction.

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ENDNOTES

[1]For a succinct statement see Reinhard Bendix, "Tradition and Modernity Reconsidered," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 9 (1967): 292–346.

[2]An early text of this sort is G. S. Rousseau and Roy Porter, eds., *The Ferment of Knowledge: Studies in the Historiography of Eighteenth Century Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980). A more recent one is Andrew Cunningham and Nicholas Jardine, eds., *Romanticism and the Sciences* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990). The implications for the constitution of the social and human sciences is the theme of Lars Magnusson, Johan Heilbron, and Björn Wittrock, eds., *The Rise of the Social Sciences and the Formation of Modernity: Conceptual Change in Context, 1750–1850* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1998).

[3]An elegant recent analysis of this development in a Weberian tradition is Wolfgang Schluchter, *Paradoxes of Modernity: Culture and Conduct in the Theory of Max Weber* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1996), chap. 4. For a recent overview of this period in European history see Robert Bartlett, *The Making of Europe: Conquest, Colonization, and Cultural Change 950–1350* (London: Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, 1993); Marcia L. Colish, *Medieval Foundations of the Western Intellectual Tradition* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1997); and Martin Malia, "A New Europe for the Old?" *Dædalus* 126 (3) (Summer 1997): 1–22.

[4]Karl Jaspers, *The Origin and Goal of History* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1953), pt. I, chaps. 1 and 5.

[5]A comment on some of this research is provided by Jared M. Diamond in "Peeling the Chinese Onion," *Nature* 391 (29 January 1998): 433–434.

[6]Marja Taussi Sjöberg has demonstrated the continued importance of such local assemblies in the Swedish context at the height of the absolutist period in the seventeenth century in her volume *Rätten och kvinnorna från släktmakt till statsmakt i Sverige på 1500–och 1600-talet* (Stockholm: Atlantis, 1996).

[7]See, for example, Robert Wuthnow, *Communities of Discourse: Ideology and Social Structure in the Reformation, the Enlightenment, and European Socialism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989), chaps. 1–4.

[8]See Johan Heilbron, "The Tripartite Division of French Social Thought: A Long-Term Perspective," in Peter Wagner, Björn Wittrock, and Richard Whitley, eds., *Discourses on Society: The Shaping of the Social Science Disciplines* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1991), 73–92; and Johan Heilbron, "French Moralists and the Anthropology of the Modern Era: On the Genesis of the Notions of 'Interest' and 'Commercial Society,'" in Magnusson, Heilbron, and Wittrock, *The Rise of the Social Sciences*, 77–106.

[9]Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "Connected Histories: Notes towards a Reconfiguration of Early Modern Eurasia," *Modern Asian Studies* 31 (3) (1997): 735–762.

[10]Schluchter, *Paradoxes of Modernity*. For a forceful argument for the relevance of extending both the temporal and the comparative perspective see Michael Mann, *A History of Power from the Beginning to A.D. 1760*, vol. 1 of *The*

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Sources of Social Power (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), esp. chap. 15.

[11]For a recent discussion from a broad Weberian perspective see S. N. Eisenstadt, *Japanese Civilization: A Comparative View* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1996), chaps. 7 and 8.; cf. Reinhard Bendix, *Kings or People: Power and the Mandate to Rule* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1978), chap. 3.

[12]Marc Bloch, *La Société Féodale: Les Classes et le Gouvernement des Hommes,* vol. 1, *Les Classes* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1949), 251.

[13]Ibid., 154.

[14]The *locus classicus* for this type of analysis is Otto Hintze's lecture at the German historical conference in Dresden in 1907. This lecture, "Die Entstehung der modernen Staatsministerien: Eine vergleichende Studie," is reprinted in its full version in Otto Hintze, *Staat und Verfassung: Gesammelte Abhandlungen zur allgemeinen Verfassungsgeschichte*, ed. Fritz Hartung (Leipzig: Koehler & Amelang, 1941), 265–310.

[15]Jaspers, *The Origin and Goal of History.*

[16]For an overview of the historical and intellectual origins of the idea of a nation-state see Istvan Hont, "The Permanent Crisis of a Divided Mankind: 'Contemporay Crisis of the Nation State,'" *Political Studies* (special issue on "The Contemporary Crisis of the Nation State," John Dunn, ed.) 42 (1994): 166–231. For an account of the early modern state from the perspective of international relations, see Adam Watson, *The Evolution of International Society* (London: Routledge, 1992), chaps. 14–17.

[17]For an overview of this conceptual shift, see Otto Brunner, "Feudalismus, feudal," in Otto Brunner, Werner Conze, and Reinhart Koselleck, eds., *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, vol. 2 (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1975), 337–350.

[18]For a discussion of this issue, see Subrahmanyam, "Connected Histories," and Mary Elizabeth Berry in this issue and in "Was Early Modern Japan Culturally Integrated?" *Modern Asian Studies* 31 (3) (1997): 547–581.

[19]For an overview of some of these developments, see the contributions to Sheldon Rothblatt and Björn Wittrock, eds., *The European and American University since 1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) as well as Dietrich Rueschemeyer and Theda Skocpol, eds., *States, Social Knowledge, and the Origins of Modern Social Policies* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996).

[20]For a detailed analysis, clearly bringing out this process of "autonomization" of the state and focusing on the role of statistics and geometry in the change of adminstrative practices in France in the eighteenth century, see Eric Brian, *La Mesure de l'Etat: Administrateurs et Géometres au XVIII Siècle* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1994).

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Sheldon Pollock

India in the Vernacular Millennium: Literary Culture and Polity, 1000–1500

VERNACULARIZATION IN THEORY

IN THE EARLY CENTURIES OF THE SECOND MILLENNIUM, wide areas of Eurasia, and most dramatically India and Europe, witnessed a transformation in cultural practice, social-identity formation, and political order with far-reaching and enduring consequences. I call this transformation vernacularization, a process of change by which the universalistic orders, formations, and practices of the preceding millennium were supplemented and gradually replaced by localized forms. The local worlds created by vernacularization, which took on ever sharper definition over time, are now giving way under the pressure of another and more powerful universalizing process, one of whose consequences has been to make us more aware of the very historicity of these local worlds.

A key site for understanding vernacularization is literary culture. It is here that we most clearly perceive intentional language change and encounter the most significant representations of a society's self-understanding and a polity's power. In vernacularization local languages are first admitted to literacy (what I sometimes call *literization*), then accommodated to "literature" as defined by preexisting cosmopolitan models (*literarization*), and thereby unified and homogenized; eventually they come to be deployed in new projects of territorialization and, in some cases, ethnicization. By this process vernacular

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literary cultures gradually encompassed and superseded the translocal codes, aesthetic forms, and geocultural spaces that had earlier been prevalent. These changes in literary culture not only correlate with transformations in social identity but appear at times to converge with a shift in the perceived scope of political power. For concurrently with vernacularization a previously dominant aspiration to transregional rule seems to have been supplanted by more limited if not bounded orders of power. This contributed crucially in some parts of the world to the formation of national states; elsewhere, other forms of polity, as yet poorly understood, came into being.

To study vernacularization is to study not the emergence into history of primeval and natural communities and cultures, but rather the historical inauguration of their naturalization. For it was during the course of the vernacular millennium that cultures and communities were ideationally and discursively invented, or at least provided with a more self-conscious voice. This naturalization took place by a double process of reduction and differentiation: As unmarked dialect was turned into unified standard, heterogeneous practice into homogenized culture, and undifferentiated space into conceptually organized place, vernacularization created new regional worlds.[1] Inside these worlds was the indigenous and natural; outside, the exogenous and artificial. Of course, this transformation did not happen everywhere in a similar manner. Not all historical processes of the cultural production of sameness and difference are the same, and understanding what may have been distinctive about the content of vernacularization in the various new worlds, such as those in southern Asia before European colonization that form the subject of this essay, is a precious if elusive prize.

At the most general level, what makes the potential difference of the non-West hard to grasp is an epistemological determinism embedded in the very categories that we use to know it. Twenty years ago students of Asian history were already seeking to resist what they saw as intellectual imperialism in the export of Euro-American models and presuppositions in the study of non-Western cultures. Yet the critique itself was contradictory. Even while denouncing the epistemic domination of the West it demanded analysis that "discerns a general

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order . . . for India and elsewhere," rejected as futile the idiographic (which leads to "an endless series of noncomparable and culture-specific 'patterns'"), and regarded as pernicious any categorization that renders the non-West radically different. While the phrase "intellectual imperialism" may sound dated today, the problem it articulates has not vanished, and the contradictions of the critique are those with which we are still living.[2]

Beyond this general epistemological trap (where the outcome of inquiry is predetermined by the very problematics that inform it) and the unhappy choice between a homogenizing universalism and a ghettoizing particularism lie two more difficulties for non-Western studies. First, the conceptual objects constituted by vernacularization in early modern Europe, foremost among them the nation-form, now appear to comprise a certain teleological necessity. It is hard to imagine alternative cultural-political meanings of this process when it has come to be, as it everywhere has, locked into national narratives. Vernacularization, it seems, must universally signal the protohistory of the nation. The second difficulty is whether we can even get to that history to query it, given the impact—or at least the estimation of the impact—of colonialism. As a generation of brilliant South Asian historians has sought to demonstrate, colonialism effected changes in the economic, social, political, and cultural spheres that produced the present while making it appear to be the past. The development of underdevelopment; the congelation of religious identities and their political mobilization ("communalism"); the rigidification, and for some even the invention, of caste; the establishment of a centralized state; the production of the nation, and of "India" itself—these are all colonial and new but have been presented under the guise of the precolonial and traditional.[3] This guise, for its part, is the artifice of the Western knowledge formation called Orientalism, and in view of the scholarship currently available it would appear that the claim often made—that, epistemically, Orientalism is untranscendable—is true.

The task of thinking through the history and meaning of the non-European vernacular millennium, therefore, has large obstacles to overcome. We must attempt to reconceptualize the key

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terms of the problematic, culture and power, from within our empirical materials, resisting at once the preconcepts of nationalized, colonialized, and orientalized thinking, and even perhaps of normal social science. It is typical of such science, as the common sense of modernity and capitalism, to reduce one of these terms (culture) to the other (power)—a reduction often embodied in the use of the concept of legitimation of power.[4] There is no reason to assume that legitimation is applicable throughout all human history, yet it remains the dominant analytic in explaining the work of culture in studies of early South and Southeast Asia. A related antifunctionalist complaint could be brought against transhistorical economistic explanations of social change. It is not to deny the role of the material world in the formation of collective identities and political orders, but rather to capture what may be different about that role under capitalism, to suggest that in earlier epochs the grounds for social change, even radical change, might not be epiphenomenal to the economic but rather located elsewhere, in some more autonomous aesthetic imperative, for example, such as a new desire for vernacular style.

Unless we suspend such prejudgments as legitimation and economism in our historical analysis of vernacularization and the formation of collective identities and political orders with which it is related, I do not see how we can hope to perceive what may be different about the relation of culture and power at other times and places. Yet it is easier to reject the conceptual instruments, such as legitimation invented in modernity, in order to explain it than to replace them with convincing new theorization developed from the stuff of precoloniality.

It is in part the challenge to understand how culture relates to power that accounts for my concentration on literary language, though there is an additional consideration. If identity formation and the social coherence of a polity are in part *mentalités,* it is reasonable that language (the foundation of *mentalité*) should figure large in both the real-world production and the theoretical analysis of polity and identity. Language is thus fundamentally a "primordial" phenomenon but not in the sense the term has recently (and I think erroneously) acquired. Primordialism should not be taken to refer to priority in time—to attachments

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thought to be perennial, ever present, and only awaiting instrumentalization—but to priority in social consciousness, and thus may be contrasted with second-order civic sentiments of belonging. Used in this sense and not, as typically, as an antonym of "instrumental," "socially constructed," or "recent," the term is an important addition to our conceptual apparatus. It certainly should not conjure up transhistorical forms of consciousness: For something to become a "first-order given," it has to be culturally produced. This is now obvious with respect to such primordial phenomena as race and regionalism, for example, but it also applies to language itself (or what Clifford Geertz, in the essay that effectively introduced the term "primordial" into discussions of national sentiment, called "linguism").[5]

For exploring the meanings and sociopolitical dimensions of the vernacular epoch, students of South Asia find themselves in an uncharacteristically enviable position. We possess in the domain of literary culture textual materials that are unique in their combination of antiquity, continuity, and multicultural interaction. These materials show that with respect to the production of literary texts, something unprecedented came into being in the period between roughly 1000 and 1500. At different places and at different times (and perhaps for different reasons, though it is this that needs investigation) people in southern Asia began to make such texts in languages that did not travel—and that they knew did not travel—as far as Sanskrit, the language that had monopolized the world of literary production for the preceding thousand years.

Admittedly, this characterization of cultural processes, as local or regional in contrast to global or transregional, as less-traveled in contrast to well-traveled, needs to be qualified. The categories are obviously relative, and in any case are meaningful only as construed in local discourse. But such qualification should not be allowed to obscure what is after all a real and important difference between cosmopolitan and vernacular literary cultures. Sanskrit literary texts circulated from Central Asia to Sri Lanka and from Afghanistan to Annam, and participating in such a literary culture meant participating in a vast ecumene. To produce a regional alternative to it and to elect to remain within a limited world was therefore to effect a break, which the agents

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themselves understood to be a break, in cultural communication and self-understanding.

The alternative world that vernacular literature creates becomes an alternative only given the presence of a "superposed" or dominant cultural formation of a transregional sort: Greek over Latin, Latin over French, Chinese over Vietnamese, Sanskrit over Javanese. And it becomes a world—a self-adequate literary culture according to the prevailing scale of norms—only by appropriating the signs of superposition in everything from lexicon and metric to rhetoric, genre, and aesthetic. Choices underlie the production of literary texts, whether vernacular or cosmopolitan, and in their interplay they constitute an intricate social phenomenon that necessarily comprises an element—however hard to capture—of cultural identity formation. Writing entails choosing a language (or, often, creating a language by the very production of texts), and thereby affiliating oneself with a particular vision of the world. While language choice itself is no self-evident matter, choosing a language for literary text production most importantly implies affiliating with an existing sociotextual community, or summoning a potential community into being, and thus has defining social significations. But it has, equally, defining political significations, since the primary site of vernacular production everywhere at its commencement was the site of political power, namely, the royal court.

Understanding the choice of language for making literature, then, and especially the radical reordering of choices in a world in vernacularization, may help us understand something about the history and nature of collective identities and political orders. It is from the act of reading-performing, hearing, reproducing, and circulating literary texts that a significant portion of group self-understanding and perhaps solidarity derives.[6] And this is especially the case when a notable feature of the texts in question is the very fact of their using vernacular language to make literature and thereby demonstrating its adequacy for such use. Whatever else it may be, literature in the vernacular millennium is a social act, with specific political and geocultural determinants.

While the importance of vernacularization, thus conceived, seems obvious, I often wonder whether I have got something

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quite wrong when I observe how little systematic attention the matter has received. Few detailed accounts of its history exist for any part of the world, let alone as a supraregional, macrohistorical phenomenon, and even fewer theorizations that help us to understand its social and political significations. Those that are available offer neat explanatory packages identifying vernacular cultural change as a result of material and social transformations, industrialization, for example, or so-called print-capitalism. They are hardly above criticism in their own domain let alone adequate for the South Asian materials presented in this essay, but if they do not work it is difficult to figure out what to substitute—that is, to understand what vernacularization means in cultural-political terms, and why the vernacular epoch began when it did.

Difficulties only increase if we take the final step, toward comparative cultural-political analysis. Indian vernacularization and its relation to changing conceptions of community and polity seem structurally similar to developments occurring in many other places. Examples from eastern Eurasia include Java in the tenth century, Siam in the fourteenth, and Vietnam in the fifteenth. In Vietnam, for instance, it is then that a demotic script is developed (*chū nōm,* an adaptation of Chinese characters for the writing of Vietnamese sounds), by means of which Vietnamese literature was able for the first time to present itself in a non-Chinese form. The significance of this cultural-political move at the time, though not leading to full vernacularization until much later, must have been great, for it took place in a world where, as one scholar put it, the standardization of writing, like the standardization of wagon axles, was a metaphor for good government. And it occurred at a watershed moment in intellectual-political history when, along with a nostalgic indigenization, the localization of Chinese cultural materials is to be found in a number of domains.[7]

Better known, of course, are the examples of vernacularization from western Eurasia. In the supersession of the Latin ecumene by script vernaculars in late-medieval Europe we may note parallels with the Indian developments, and not only in point of chronology, that are astonishing. And the role of vernacularization in the making of early European modernity in the political and

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social spheres—though in precisely the way I am formulating it this question seems understudied even for Europe—may suggest something of an analytical model for India. Yet it is just the elements of this model that I want to suspend for now. If the view from Western modernity suggests a particular kind of correlation among language, collective identity, and the political order, this may be only a European particular for whose universalization we have as yet little warrant.

VERNACULARIZATION IN PRACTICE

From around the beginning of the common era, the hitherto largely sacral language of Sanskrit came to be used for the first time as a vehicle for literary and political expression throughout South and much of Southeast Asia. The quite extraordinary story of how all this came about need not be restated here.[8] Suffice it to say that by the middle of the millennium, there are clear signs everywhere in southern Asia by which literati and their courtly patrons could recognize a common culture and in which we can perceive the presence of a kind of cosmopolitan community. A strong rule obtains throughout this cosmopolis regulating the functions of Sanskrit and vernacular languages: Sanskrit alone was employed for the production of literary and political texts, the latter being the royal genealogies and eulogies (*praśasti*) that often formed the prologue to inscriptions. Vernacular languages, most of which came to literization first through the mediation of Sanskrit, were used—but this was their sole use—for the production of documents (specifying the boundaries of a land grant, for example). For the greater part of the history of this cosmopolitan formation, "literized literature" or expressive texts committed to writing (the Sanskrit term is *kāvya*) could be made only in the transethnic, transregional, and (according to its own self-understanding) transhistorical language of Sanskrit and never in a local code.[9] This is something both the theory and practice of Sanskrit culture corroborate. Given that the cosmopolitan culture of the Sanskrit ecumene was increasingly restricted to the expressive and divorced from the documentary, its relation to power seems to have been far more

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aesthetic than instrumental, a "poetry of power," perhaps, in an aesthetic state.

The history of literary culture in southern Asia for a period of some five centuries beginning a little before 1000, however, shows everywhere a decisive turn away from Sanskrit, whereby it is gradually supplemented by local language and eventually supplanted for most purposes of literary and political communication. The cultural processes at work here are disparate and complex, but most cases seem to have three components in common: Superposed literariness (and its philological appurtenances) is appropriated and localized; the geocultural sphere of literary communication becomes itself a matter of literary representation, something we might call literary territorialization; and vernacular literary production becomes a central concern to royal courts. I want to illustrate these features across a variety of literary cultures, in however summary a manner, in order to demonstrate the reality and cultural-political character of this vernacular transformation.

Kannada, a language found in the present-day South Indian state of Karnataka, is in many ways a paradigmatic case.[10] For about a thousand years until the eighth century, ruling lineages of the region expressed their political will generally in Sanskrit. Only then does Kannada, first literized in the fifth century, begin to be used for the documentary portion of inscriptions; by the thirteenth century, most dynastic inscriptions, including eulogistic texts, are in the vernacular. In the ninth century its first literary texts are produced, some four hundred years after the language is first inscribed (a timelag found almost everywhere). The new literature is profoundly self-conscious; it is concerned above all with what it means to produce literature in Kannada as opposed to Sanskrit, and with the identity of the world for which this literature is produced. "The Way of the King of Poets" (*Kavirājamārgam*), a treatise on vernacular poetics composed at the Rāṣṭrakūṭa court around 850, shows this clearly. Adapted from a seventh-century Sanskrit treatise, "The Mirror of Poetry" (*Kāvyādarśa*), "The Way" aims first to constitute Kannada as an epistemological object worthy of analysis by providing it with theory, and, by conducting the discourse in Kannada itself, to make this a language of science

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even while establishing it as a language of literature. It also seeks to discipline usage, thereby investing the language with both the stability and the dignity that characterize all literary language in India on the Sanskrit model. Yet another crucial interest is placing literary culture in the world, and constituting the social group above all as participants in that culture by plotting out its specific geocultural sphere:

> Between the Kaveri and Godavari rivers is that region (*nāḍu*) of Kannada, a well-known people-area (*janapada*), an illustrious outstanding domain within the circle of the earth. Within this, there is a smaller region between Kisuvolal, the renowned great city of Kopana, Puligere, and Omkunda, where the very essence of Kannada is found. The people of that region are able both to speak in the awareness of what is seemly and to reflect in the awareness of what has been spoken. By nature they are clever and even without deliberate study they are proficient in the usages of literature.[11]

The entire apparatus of literary knowledge that the text hereby introduces was thus understood to have application in a specific place, and only there; for a specific people, and only them. And in stark contrast to the rootless and placeless cosmopolitan Sanskrit—literally "the refined" or "the grammatically analyzable" or even (resonance from an archaic period) "the sacramental"—place and language have here become fully homonymic (Kannaḍa, or *Karṇāta[ka]* in Sanskritized form), as they will in most of the other vernacular worlds.

A second key text in the production of the Kannada vernacular is the *Vikramārjunavijaya* of Pampa (ca. 950), an adaptation of the Sanskrit epic, the *Mahābhārata.* The localization of a superposed epic tradition is, to be sure, a common step in the elaboration and ennoblement of a regional code; witness Livius Andronicus's *Odyssey* that inaugurates Latin literature in 240 B.C. The Sanskrit *Mahābhārata,* for its part, has inestimable importance for the production of influential forms of both political imagination and an imaginary institution of a transregional world before colonialism—not "India," and yet some conceptual object extending from Nepal to Assam to the southern peninsula, and thence to Sind, Qandahar, Kashmir.[12] Throughout this

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text, perhaps the world's greatest tale of the nature of political power, the subcontinent as a whole and as a limit is projected at every important juncture to be the crucial frame of reference for both the culture that the epic embodies and the political power it so ruthlessly dissects. It is this geographical imagination that Pampa adjusts to his primary narrative project by transforming the capital city of the epic prototype into the capital of his patron King Arikesari II, and making the grand circumambulations of the quarters of the subcontinent, around which the action of the Sanskrit epic is organized, into a circuit of the central Deccan. The political and cultural space of the epic has been reduced to the Kannada world, and with it the vision of how and where political power functions.

Comparable vernacular strategies may be observed throughout the Indian world in the following centuries. To the east of Karnataka in what is today Andhra Pradesh, we know that vernacular intellectuals first experimented with inscribed Telugu in ninth- and tenth-century epigraphs, but the tradition of circulation and reproduction of vernacular texts begins only in the mid-eleventh century.[13] It is little wonder, given the model available in Kannada, that the first of these texts is Nannaya's adaptation of the *Mahābhārata,* produced at the court of the Veṅgi Cāḷukyas (ca. 1050), a work composed in accordance with the formal requirements of Sanskrit literature and in a new cosmopolitan idiom that will remain dominant in Telugu for centuries to come. Some generations later a geographical entity called "Andhra" would be described by a court poet to the vassals of the Kākatīya kings (the Godavari delta is "the very heart of the land of Andhra, its seven rivers like seven veins of nectar running from the center of a lotus"), and a contemporary vividly expresses at once to the newness of the vernacular invention, its production of place, and the role of the court when he writes "Earlier, there was poetry in Sanskrit . . . but the Cāḷukya kings and many others caused poetry to be born in Telugu and to be fixed in place . . . in the Andhra land."[14]

A dramatic change in literary culture occurs in the Tamil world under the later Cōḷas (sometimes rendered "Cholas," ca. 1000–1200). If the much contested conventional dating is accepted, Tamil saw the production of a written literature in the

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Sangam or "Academy" of the early centuries of the common era (subsequently largely lost). Yet the language by which political will expressed itself in Tamil country for most of the first millennium, even in the realm of the Pāndyan kings, legendary site of the Sangam, was Sanskrit. From around 1000, the Cōḻas began to inscribe their spectacular political eulogies in Tamil. This development is linked to others in the wider literary sphere. We find a new literary territorialization through a mapping of the "region of pure Tamil" language (*cen-tamiḻ-nilam*): "To the north of the river Vaikai (on whose banks is situated the city of Maturai), to the south of the river Marutam, to the east of Karuvūr, to the west of Maruvūr."[15] With the production around the same period of an adaptation of the Sanskrit "Mirror" (*Tantiyalaṃkāram*), a new grammar based on Sanskrit categories (*Vīracoḻiyam*), and Kampan's magnificent version of the Sanskrit *Rāmāyaṇa*—all courtly productions—a new epoch of Tamil literature commenced, the themes and idiom of which all indicate the localization of the cosmopolitan aesthetic.

In Sri Lanka, despite the fact that documentary Sinhala is literized as early as the second century B.C., and some literary Sinhala graffiti dates from the fifth or sixth century, an innovation in literary culture fully comparable to what we see elsewhere occurs at the end of the millennium as vernacular writers began to select and appropriate formal and thematic features of Sanskrit poetry. Paradigmatic is the "Crest Jewel of Poetry" (*Kavsilumina,* Skt. *Kāvyacuḍāmaṇi*) of King Parākramabāhu II (ca. 1250), a poem deeply imbued with Sanskrit literary ideals. Here too the Sanskrit "Mirror" was localized under the name "The Ornament of [Our] Own Language" (*Siyabāslakāra,* Skt. *Svabhāṣālaṃkāra*), and a new grammatical and poetical treatise was composed, "Compendium of Principles" (*Sidatsaṅgarā,* Skt. *Siddhāntasaṃgraha*). It is during this period, too (under Parākramabāhu I, r. 1153–1186), that the island attained something approaching political unification by throwing off subordination to mainland polities, and for the first time literary representations of a newly coherent geocultural space appeared; the

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Pūjāvaliya, a twelfth-century poem, provides a detailed description of the island personified as a beautiful woman.[16]

The Sanskrit cosmopolitan formation had included a large area of Southeast Asia, where an exemplary instance of vernacularization may be found in Java. In Sanskrit epigraphical records available from the early fifth century on, Javanese never speaks literarily but is restrictedfor some four centuries to the domain of the documentary. At the beginning of the second millennium, an extraordinary efflorescence of courtly literature, without parallel elsewhere in Southeast Asia for centuries, manifests itself in the emergent polities of eastern Java. This body of texts, especially the *parvwan* (or *wawachan,* Skt. *vacana*) and *kakawin* (Skt. *kāvya*) literature—including versions of the Sanskrit epics, the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*—is comparable in every way to the vernacular compositions of the same period in South Asia, in respect to form (complex Sanskrit metrics), language (a highly Sanskritized register of Javanese), localized representations of political power, and geocultural expositions.[17]

The shift in the choice of codes for making literary and political texts that began in South India, Sri Lanka, and Java around 900 and reached maturity by 1200 occurred in northern India at a somewhat later date and under conditions of political change different from what obtained in the south. It remains disputed just what the rise of new ruler lineages in the north, the Delhi Sultanate and its successors from the fourteenth century, meant to the breakup of the Sanskrit cosmopolis. We do know that vernacularization here is, in the first instance, the work of Muslim intellectuals associated with these lineages.[18] But soon non-Muslim courts are vernacularized as well. In fifteenth-century Gwalior under the Tomar dynasty, for example, Braj gradually came to be used as a language of state (though political eulogy in the vernacular nowhere becomes common in northern India), and for the first time literary texts were produced that attempted to recreate the cosmopolitan idiom of Sanskrit in that language. In Viṣṇudās's *Mahābhārata* of 1435 (and in his *Rāmāyaṇakathā*), old subject matter is redeployed in a way relevant to the concerns of contemporary Gwalior, with respect to their culture and its relationship to the

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past, their present political circumstances, and, not least, their relationship to a new literary code.[19]

It would be possible to chart comparable literary-cultural changes in most of the rest of southern Asia over the following centuries. For Gujarati, for example, we begin to find texts that constitute the language as a literary vernacular by the end of the twelfth century; for Assamese by the fourteenth; for Oriya and Malayalam by the fifteenth. In almost all cases courtly literati were centrally involved in their production.

By appropriating Sanskrit models for inscriptional and literary expressivity, remapping epic space, invoking new sociotextual communities that would inhabit the new vernacular places and (re)produce themselves by reading/hearing those new vernacular texts, courtly intellectuals in southern Asia at the start of the second millennium created a wholly new kind of cultural formation. Although the cosmopolitan code of Sanskrit is not eliminated, anymore than Latin was eliminated in vernacular Europe, its significance in the literary sphere and in the articulation of the political dramatically decreased. All this we can see, measure, and know. What is far more difficult to make sense of—in any given case, let alone for the vastly varied world of late medieval South Asia—are the political and social meanings of these cultural transformations.

FROM IMPERIAL TO VERNACULAR POLITY

The forms of polity that appear in later medieval India, with which the vernacular transformation may be correlated, take on clearer definition against the background of the earlier political world of South Asia. What characterizes much of that world for almost a thousand years—from the middle of the fourth century B.C., when political history takes on a sharper image with the Mauryas, to about the fourth century in the south and perhaps as late as the ninth century in the north—is the existence, or at least purposeful representation of the existence, of large-scale imperial polities. I say "imperial" even though empire is everywhere notoriously resistant to coherent definition, while our understanding of exactly how these political formations worked in early India remains very imperfect.[20] There is little reason to

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believe, for example, that anything comparable to the Roman empire ever existed in India, with its bureaucrats and military apparatus spread over vast territory and exercising control over everything from garrisons to standardized weights and measures. And at times one does suspect that in attempting to map the territorial expansiveness that to some extent must define empire, we may only be mapping an illusion of historians pressed with inventing classifications for India's political past.[21]

Yet there is also little doubt that the universalistic polity was a dominant ideal in early India. Among a number of ruling lineages, including the Mauryas (320–150 B.C.), the Kuṣāṇa/Śaka (Indo-Scythians) (150–300), the Sātavāhanas (225 B.C.– A.D. 250), the Guptas (320–550) and their various successor political formations in the north (especially that of the Gurjara-Pratīhāra, ca. 750–950), and, in Southeast Asia, the Khmer of Angkor (900–1300), the exaction of tribute, the command of military resources, the formation of matrimonial alliances, the enactment of political ceremonies and symbolic practices (temple building, the establishing of victory pillars) so as to mark a sphere of influence—all this could be exercised limitlessly, without regard for ecological, cultural, or any other boundary. In other words, *rājyam* or imperium, as we may discern it up to about the middle of the first millennium, strove for, and in some practices seems to have achieved, translocal spread.

In contrast to the history of change in literary and political language that we can trace with some certitude, the history of change in the structure of polity in India for the millennium between the disappearance of the last empires and the colonial encounter (the history of the Mughals excepted) remains obscure.[22] Two dominant models, one the feudal and the other the so-called segmentary, give radically different accounts of the political and moral economy of the period. They agree, however, that the state is rather hard to find. In the latter model it consists of hierarchically parcellated authority with ritual hegemony at the center, and in the former it withers away under vast transfers of wealth to a feudal nobility. Whatever the model, scholars seem primarily concerned with how much "central coercion" and "incorporation" may be said to have existed. In terms of practices of power, the state may be defined as the agency that

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embodies the capacity to raid and loot; to build capital cities and sometimes temples; to gift land to Brahman, Jain, and other communities and to endow religious institutions; to grant revenue income to loyal military men and to extract taxes; to attempt to perpetuate these practices in the transfer of power; and to enshrine the fame of the patriline and patronize poets to do so. Most of these practices show substantial continuity over a long term, though in any given instance the whole assemblage (the "state") seems to have been a pretty fragile affair. As for its cultural dimension (despite what we saw was the central role of the royal court in the great vernacular transformation), it is notable for its absence from the scholarly literature; an important recent survey mentions culture just once.[23] If analysis of middle-period polity is only beginning, analysis of polity in relationship to culture can hardly be said to have begun.

Given the conceptual disarray, it is difficult to speak confidently about change in the medieval political order. In the domain of the geopolitical, however, one may detect a new development beginning around the start of the second millennium that, if not a mere artifact of the kind of sources we have, would be of major significance: the forsaking of the universalistic model of imperium coupled with a new political regionalization (in some areas perhaps accompanied by greater centralization through conquest and bureaucratization of the older core area). The image of "(limited) universal sovereignty" inherited from the imperial world may have survived in some sense and even been actualized through periodic looting adventures to distant lands, but lasting dominion no longer was sought beyond the enlarged core. While political power usually remained distributed among local ruling lineages, in some ways it appears that the expanded central zone attained a kind of fit with the then-crystallizing literary language areas. A good example of this process is found in Tamil country under the Cōḻas.

In one of his most suggestive essays the late Burton Stein examined the production of regionality in the premodern Tamil world.[24] Stein also perceives that new regions ("cultural subregions") had become identifiable by the twelfth century, though he nowhere addresses the macrohistorical questions raised by this newly visible division of political and cultural space. Yet his

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observations on the mechanisms by which it was produced in Tamil land, even thus limited, have wider pertinence. Stein distinguishes between "circulatory" (or functional) and "cognitive" (or formal) regions, the former constituted by the actual movement of people through space, the latter produced through linguistic criteria and the representation of place in textual remains. Before the twelfth century, these two regions of *Tamilakam* did not coincide. Under the Cōḻa overlords, however, circulatory space attained a certain isomorphism with cognitive region, a closer fit "between the conception of a Tamilakam covering a substantial part of peninsular India and the actual movement of quite ordinary people within that larger, cognitive region." The most significant cultural component of this circulatory world was not the armed force of the state or its political administrators but the cosmopolitan-vernacular literary texts of Cōḻa dynastic inscriptions in the Tamil language that these two groups disseminated about the region. Such texts both articulated in their representations and produced by their actual diffusion a cultural-political space, the "actual and deliberate demarcations of the region of [Cōḻa] overlordship" that constituted "a macroregion of distinctive and homogeneous cultural quality."

Stein's account (corroborated by the history of Tamil literary culture described above) flags key features of the cultural-political transformation that South Asia witnessed in late medievality. These include three noted above that are present in virtually every case of literary vernacularization: the new definition of culture-space, the importance of superposed models for local-language literary creation, and the interest of the court in the production of vernacularity. What causal factors account for all this, and why this all happened when it did Stein does not tell us, and twenty years later we are not much closer to knowing.[25] Any cogent hypothesis would need to reach conceptual clarity about the causal relationship between cognitive region (and the language practices that constitute it) and circulatory (political) practice—in other words, about what kind of relation literary vernacularization can bear to the creation of vernacular polity.

The decision among courtly literati to abandon the global language of Sanskrit and speak locally in their literary and

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political texts inaugurates a determinate literary-cultural dynamic. Vernacular language choice, within the context of Sanskrit cultural norms and activities, entails a commitment to a range of disciplinary language practices (grammaticization, for example) and technologies for reproduction (especially writing) that ensure the unification, standardization, and above all differentiation of the vernacular code. Whereas in "real life" there may be not languages but only language-continua—where "Kannada" imperceptibly merges into "Telugu" (like "French" into "Italian"), so that in fact Kannada and Telugu (and French and Italian) should not even be regarded as pregiven points on a spectrum—an important effect of literary vernacularization is to divide that continuum. The language boundedness that results has a logic akin to the logic of spatial boundedness, though each has its specific instrumentalities. The former (pertaining to Stein's conceptual domain) deploys grammars, dictionaries, and literary texts to discipline and purify, but above all to *define*. In the same way, related cultural-political practices such as the distribution of royal inscriptions (in Stein's circulatory domain) divide homogeneous space. The unification of vernacular language not only partakes of the logic of the unification of a new type of political place, but is historically copresent with it.

The divisions of linguistic continua and homogeneous space into vernacular languages and heterogeneous places accordingly represent a cultural act, not a natural fact. They are not givens—yet they are not, for all that, unreal. The dichotomy some draw between the natural and the social in theorizing regionality is thus too reductive to accommodate materials such as these.[26] The production of vernacular places is at once a social, historically contingent phenomenon and one not constituted solely by representation. In late medieval southern Asia such places are brought into existence by the literary-language practices of vernacular intellectuals and corroborated by the inscriptional-material practices—textual signs of material transactions such as land gifting—of ruling lineages. Thus the distribution pattern of Kannada inscriptions issued by Kannada-speaking Cāḷukyas (ca. 1000–1200) or of Marathi inscriptions by the Marathi-speaking Yādavas (ca. 1100–1300)[27] signifies not so much accommoda-

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tion to natural language areas as the continuing reproduction of a division of vernacular locations that these real practices themselves had recently created.

Such language-, literary-, and culture-areas, undoubtedly hazy in thirteenth-century Tamilakam and everywhere else, nonetheless had begun to constitute something like a limit of political practice there and elsewhere. Unlike the ancient Sātavāhanas, the western Cāḷukyas of the twelfth century did not seek overlordship deep into Telugu- or Tamil-speaking areas; on the contrary, the political domain of the Cāḷukyas came to approximate the culture-region as described in the principal Kannada literary texts discussed above.[28] In the same epoch, the Solankis of Gujarat, or the Yādavas of Maharashtra, unlike the imperial Indo-Scythians, did not extend their power outside the newly emerging Gujarati or Marathi vernacular zones. The Gajapati domain to the east (ca. 1100–1500), unlike that of Kharavela of a thousand years earlier, seems to have grown increasingly symmetrical with the domain of Oriya. Somewhere in this newly regionalized, unmapped mapping seems to lie a readjustment of the vision of political dominion; what we now find are best designated not imperial but vernacular polities.[29]

Yet if language and place were becoming mutually constitutive through the representations and circulation of vernacular texts—our first two key factors—the third factor, the role of the court, rarely finds direct articulation. None of our texts, however courtly in origin, shows explicit concern with the political coherence of the cultural locales they create. In the case of Kannada, for example, despite the growing symmetry between conceptual realm and Rāṣṭrakūṭa/Cāḷukya overlordship under which many of these very texts were produced, no Kannada literary or documentary text articulates anything like a Kannada political enterprise; the political as an overt territorial project is unspoken.

Something important about this paradox—the presence of a geocultural discourse in the absence of a geopolitical one—may be captured by an etymological exercise. In Kannada, the term *nāḍu,* "area" or "locale," which plays an important role in the construction of a vernacular polity in the Kannada-speaking Deccan, is antonym to *kāḍu,* uncultivated forest. The operative

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metaphor involved in the concept accordingly evokes human labor and (agri)cultural transformation, and the place of the social world is thus counterposed to the space of the natural world. When Pampa claims for himself the title "teacher of the *nāḍu*" by his literary achievement, he has in mind a cultural as much as a political place, a regional world that one teaches as well as rules and that exists as much through literary circulation as through dominion.[30] In the semantics of political place in Latinate Europe, by contrast, "*regio*" bespeaks a religious act of the *rex* that produces what it decrees.[31] The power to turn space into place is thus embodied in radically different forms of social agency in the two worlds. South Asian kings are clearly interested in vernacular places, but it is the poet who creates them.

This is the first of what we shall see to be a number of Euro-Indian incommensurabilities. And it is important to explore these in order to grasp that while the morphology of the vernacular millennium as a cultural phenomenon may be everywhere comparable, its significations as a phenomenon of power may differ in fundamental ways.

EUROPE VERNACULARIZED

The vernacularization of Europe in relation to political processes appears to be an astonishingly understudied question. In 1992, the editor of the new *Oxford History of Medieval Europe,* while rightly noting that a major factor in "the new diversity" that marked the late Middle Ages was "the exploitation of a variety of languages in important writings," confessed to be at a loss to explain the development: the origins of the vernacular turn are as "mysterious" as its results are "obvious and spectacular."[32] Thus, too, M. T. Clanchy says: "[So] much remains speculative about the beginnings of writing down vernacular languages in Europe . . . why a growing number of patrons and writers in the twelfth century [in England] ceased to be satisfied with Latin as the medium of writing and experimented with 'Romance' and 'French' instead."[33] There does not even seem to be agreement on who did what to whom. We are left to follow our party sympathies when trying to adjudicate

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among Gramsci, who held that vernacularization came from the national-popular below rising up against a Latinizing "mandarinism" (the vernaculars are "written down when the people regain importance"), E. R. Curtius, who was convinced it came from re-Latinized elites above (without whose contribution the vernacular literatures become "incomprehensible"), and centrists for whom agency disappears altogether; people do not actively choose culture, and the vernaculars just "emerge." The whole question remains mysterious and speculative in part because vernacularization is rarely studied as a social or political phenomenon. Even the most sustained historical sociology of courtly culture and the civilizing process, that of Norbert Elias, almost totally ignores language and literature.[34]

The breakup of the Latin cosmopolitan world, the regionalization of cultural-political production in western Europe during the eleventh to fourteenth centuries, the structural linguistic differences, and even asynchrony of north-south vernacularization (in crude language-family terms, Germanic Europe and Dravidian India contrasting with Romance Europe and Indo-Aryan India both in the pace and nature of their vernacularizing processes) constitute a historical transformation strikingly similar to what happens in medieval southern Asia.[35] Elsewhere I hope to spell these parallels out in greater detail, rethink the political processes involved, and assess the various explanations scholars have offered for these events. An initial pass through the material suggests considerable disagreement and imprecision. One scholar has recently argued, for example, that King Alfred and his successors (ninth-tenth centuries) established a new vernacular and bilingual *grammatica*, "in which an English and Anglo-Latin literary culture were tied to national identity and ideology."[36] Most students of national identity would find this claim hopelessly anachronistic. At the other end of the geographical and historical spectrum, texts like Dante's *De Vulgari Eloquentia* and *De Monarchia* (early fourteenth century) have elicited strongly divergent interpretations. A political scientist argues that the two tracts—and thus implicitly, the very relationship of culture and power—represent parallel and nonintersecting concerns for Dante, whereas a literary historian insists that Dante's political, linguistic, and

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aesthetic theories are thoroughly intertwined and grounded in "national" thought of a decidedly modernist cast.[37]

Clearly, much remains to be sorted out, but what I understand at present of the politics and sociology of European and Indian vernacularization suggests that, however similar the actual processes appear to be, their conceptual foundations, social uses, and thus meanings differ sharply, especially when viewed in conjunction with larger political and social trends. I want to review a few of these differences here, starting at a rather abstract level.

Late-medieval Europe and India differ profoundly on the question of language multiplicity. In the former, multilinguality is tainted with the guilt of diversity: Babel marks an original sin, and European cultural politics in early modernity can arguably be interpreted, at the level of language, as a project of reduction and hence purification.[38] India, by contrast—though it knew forms of will-to-power in the realm of language and even narratives of language decay—never mythologized the need to purify, let alone sought to purify, original sins of diversity through a program of eradication. Diversity was not a punishment, multilinguality was not a sin that needed to be expiated, and though in practice it led to a diminution of multilingual capacities, vernacularization was never conceptually opposed to them.

There seems to be in early modern Europe what may be formulated as an overdetermination of literary vernacularization by religious vernacularization. This can be seen throughout the history of the vernacular turn, from the very beginning (the West-Frankish *Sequence of St. Eulalie* 881; indeed, most literature preserved to the end of the eleventh century is religious poetry, much of it translated from the Latin) to the high-water mark, Luther's Bible. This is evidence of an important confluence of communicative, social, and religious factors, including the growing decay of Latin competence, the desire for easier access to religious knowledge and for simplifying religious practices, and the assertions of religious individuality on the part of European rulers.

Here, too, India looks different. Sanskrit communicative competence remained largely undiminished in South Asia (including

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the north, where vernacular writers typically received serious Sanskrit education). The most important Sanskrit holy texts remained untranslated during the vernacular revolution. Instead, vernacular writings themselves became new scriptures, such as Śaiva "sayings" (*vacana*) in Kannada, hagiographies in Marathi, *tantras* in Javanese, and even a Tamil Veda in the *Tirumuṟai.* The earliest literary production in many vernaculars was in any case more concerned with the terrestrial than the transcendent (Pampa himself makes the distinction, *laukika,* "this-worldly," versus *āgamika,* "scriptural," and labels his *Bhārata* the former). And although I cannot illustrate the fact here, religious pluralism rather than individualism is characteristic of medieval rulership. The European principle of *cuius regio, eius religio,* where "each local ruler dictated the religious denomination of his own territory," is off the South Asian conceptual map.[39] Forms of religious identity may have grown increasingly regionalized during this period (as in the new pilgrimage circuits in thirteenth-century Maharashtra), but the nature of the polity as such seems unaffected by such developments. Governance and religion, in the most important late-medieval meanings of the latter term, were more thoroughly divorced than is usually recognized.[40]

When literary vernacularization is fully engaged in western Europe in the late medieval period, an invariable concomitant seems to be the production of what one author has called "origin paradigms." These were meant to provide other literary cultures with conceptual bases comparable to what fourteenth-century Italy envisioned as the renewal of Roman power. We have no synthetic account of such national-literary origin mythologemes, but what one finds in Iberia (speculations on the Greek sources of the Spanish language), France (on the Celtic-Gallic or Germanic-Frankish sources of French), and England (on the Celtic-British sources of English) indicates that some kind of important "cultural-political mechanism" was widely in operation.[41] What this suggests, too, is a broad concern with origins, purity of descent, and exclusion of mixture, as well as a sense of historical necessity and a growing conception of peoples as the subject of history.

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The concerns of vernacular intellectuals in India are totally other. Nowhere in the manifold data on language, identity, and polity for precolonial South Asia does anything like ethnicity—which for purposes of this discussion we may define as the politicization of group sentiment—seem to find clear expression. Participation in a literary culture was not participation in a religious group of narrow construction or an ancestral group of biological necessity. There never was in South Asia a linkage of "blood" and "tongue" as already in medieval Europe[42]—even the concept "mother tongue" is unknown—and cultures were not closed systems. Choice of literary language was not the result of personal destiny; speakers of Konkani could choose Kannada, as speakers of Malayalam chose Sinhala. Nor at any time before the postcolonial era can we observe the production of what has been called fictive ethnicity, where "the frontiers of kinship dissolve" and a new "circle of extended kinship" comprising "the people" comes into existence.[43] Indian vernacular cultures demonstrate little concern for the Herderian "uniqueness" over which national cultures of the present obsess. On the contrary, all strive for a kind of equivalence by their approximation to Sanskrit cosmopolitanism. The vernacular turn was not a quest for authenticity, nor was it informed by any kind of vision, historicist or other, of tribal unity. There is in fact hardly any propagation of shared memories or common descent.

A final and crucial feature of European vernacularization, perhaps related to the highly marked status of linguistic diversity, is a linkage of ethnos-imperium-language. Whatever its original meanings may have been, the threat that Jeremiah's God makes to the Hebrews, "I shall impose upon you a people whose language you shall not know," becomes for the early fourteenth-century councilor of Charles V of France, Nicole Oresme, a proof-text for rejecting transnational imperial government: "And that is therefore something as contrary to nature as if a man should rule over a people who do not understand his mother tongue."[44] It is but a step from this to the ordinances of Villers-Cotterêts issued by François I in 1539 requiring the use of "langage maternel françois" in all judicial and administrative proceedings.

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The kind of ideational conjuncture presented by Oresme, famously echoed in the next century by Lorenzo de' Medici for Tuscan and Antonio de Nebrixa for Castilian, has never been directly expressed in any Indian text before modernity. The newly regionalized world of South Asia shows vernacularity but without, it seems, "vernacular mobilization," in Anthony D. Smith's idiom. And yet, while it may be that the modern nation turns compatriots "into co-nationals through a process of mobilization into the vernacular culture" (for "only then can the old-new culture become a political base" for the political and cultural competition of modernity), we have no obvious reason to accept—certainly not for Europe but perhaps not even for India, where power was clearly concerned with culture—the correlate of Smith's argument, that the old culture of nonmodernity "had no other end beyond itself."[45]

THE END OF THE VERNACULAR MILLENNIUM AND THE START OF ANALYSIS

At every turn in this inquiry we encounter in South Asia transformations in culture similar to those of early European modernity but that relate to power in ways less easily equated. To understand literary vernacularization in Europe from the fourteenth century onward—the vernacularization that helped make early modern Europe modern—as the nationalization of literature may be a teleological view, but it is not unreasonable given the conjuncture of factors noticed above. But what are we to do with vernacularization where the telos is absent and the national symmetry of state and culture never emerged in the instrumentalized, rationalized way it did in European modernity? How, in other words, can we understand the South Asian vernacular turn as a problem of both culture and power outside of a national narrative?

These are hard problems, which scholars of Asia prefer to avoid, concentrating instead on the apparently more consequential, and certainly more manageable, interactions of Asian polities with European colonial regimes. At any rate, it is assumed that the transformations in polity, sociality, and cultural consciousness generated by colonialism are the ones that really

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count in the making of Indian modernity; to study the precolonial is to engage in counterfactual scholasticism.

In addition to this, most scholars of vernacularization, looking through a lens crafted in Europe, have treated it as a nineteenth-century phenomenon. This is the case with the two most influential theories of the production of vernacular formations in the past decade, Ernest Gellner's *Nations and Nationalism* and Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities*.[46] However they may diverge on other matters, both highlight cultural-cognitive processes based on language, especially standardized literary language, in the production of nation-consciousness. Neither account, however, has anything of substance to say about the historicity of these literary languages in the first place; yet it is precisely on a secure determination of this matter that much of the validity of the two theories rests.

Gellner's theory of modern nationalism rests on the shifting boundaries of literary and nonliterary cultures. In agrarian societies, we are told, a wide gap is opened up by the fact that rulers participated in high literary cultures typically larger than any polity, while the ruled participated in low nonliterary cultures that were typically smaller. The former are based on transethnic and transpolitical idioms (Latin, Arabic, etc.); the latter, by contrast, are unwritten and "invisible." The conclusions Gellner draws from all this for a theory of the nation are major: "[P]erhaps the central, most important fact about agro-literate society is this: almost everything in it militates against the definition of political units in terms of cultural boundaries. . . . One might put it this way: of the two potential partners, culture and power, destined for each other according to nationalist theory, neither has much inclination for the other in the conditions prevailing in the agrarian age."[47] All this changes in industrialized societies, where the demand for an educated workforce requires a standard literary language, produced either by the generalization of high literary culture or, more often, by the elevation (i.e., literary vernacularization) of the low. It is the state that creates this culture, and thereby the coincidence of the units of power and culture—nationalism—is produced.

A long vernacular millennium is not easily accommodated in this neat model.[48] The simple dichotomy between transregional

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ecumene and invisible local vernacular before modernity that forms the bedrock of his thesis crumbles when we realize that unified vernacular literary cultures were produced in the course of the first half of the second millennium from within the heart of Eurasian "agro-literate" societies themselves. On the one occasion Gellner alludes to the actual history of literary cultures in Europe, he asks what might have happened had industrialization begun "during the High Middle Ages, before the development of vernacular literatures and the emergence of what was eventually destined to become the basis of the various national high cultures." But it was precisely in the High Middle Ages that many European vernaculars reached maturity, and thus well before the industrialization that he takes to be their causal condition (and well before the print-capitalism that Anderson believes first served to "'assemble' related vernaculars" into unitary and codified literary languages). These considerations make it hard to agree that "No-one, or almost no-one, has an interest in promoting cultural homogeneity" in preindustrial society or that we should consider it "absurd" to find local culture linked with a political principal before modernity.[49]

By questioning these models I am not suggesting that all vernacularizations exhibit the "desperate concerns" that Gellner sees in nineteenth-century Europe, or that they should be interpreted as "national"-cultural processes. "National" (not to speak of "nationalism") refers to that specific set of European practices for which the term was invented, and which through colonialism came to be exported to the rest of the world.[50] We are still obliged, however, to put under scrutiny the causal models developed to explain that nationalism. As I see it, the historical logic of two of the most influential theories of the nation are confounded not only by what happened elsewhere in the world but in their own domain, and fail to help us understand—perhaps impede us from even seeing—what did happen, let alone understanding the ways this linkage may have varied throughout Eurasia, and the implications of such variation—the other possible "ends" of culture beyond itself—for a coherent social theory of the non-European. Moreover, the functionalism embedded in these models and a more subtle teleology work to rule out, a priori, any alternative social-theoretical possibilities.

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To seek to understand the culture-power relation over the long term, accordingly, is to try to pull ourselves up by our own bootstraps. In order grasp the non-European, non-"modern," nonnational, we are required to set aside the conceptual objects and apparatus constituted by European modernity and nationalism without having anything to put in their place. The critique of Orientalism and of historical knowledge in their strong forms also purports to make the precolonial past, and the past as such, unknowable in any veridical sense. And anyway, that past—the very discourse of vernacular origins—has already been polluted by the politics of cultural identity in much of the world, contemporary India included. All that most scholars are prepared to say about those forms of cultural expression and representation produced in middle-period Asia—call them primary forms—is that they have provided the raw conceptual materials and resources for derivative (colonized and, later, modernized) thinking about political sovereignty and collective identities: cultural-nationalist movements such as the DMK (or "Dravidian Advancement Movement") in Tamil Nadu, or the forces of "linguism" that brought about the reorganization of regions into linguistic states in India in the 1950s.

Strong as these objections are, none is fatal to a reconstructive historical project, so long as they are built into it. That we can make veridical statements about the colonial past and about Orientalism itself implies both a more generalizable possibility of historical truth and some kind of access to knowledge of what Orientalism falsely imagined. We can also chart the ways in which derivative representations have reworked primary ones. And a serious commitment to historical-anthropological reflexivity can help neutralize epistemological determinism. Far more paralyzing than all this is also something simpler: the absence of deep empirical scholarship about the core questions of the development of polity in relation to culture. This is the vexatious legacy of a set of disciplinary practices that for too long rendered the humanities indifferent to the social world, and the social sciences indifferent to the world of the aesthetic and expressive. It is this deficiency that makes any statement about the matter essentially guesswork at present.

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In the first half of the second millennium in many parts of Eurasia we can perceive a transformation in the literary-cultural domain unprecedented in its novelty and scope. Whereas some traits seem to be widely shared—there is clearly a new prestige in going vernacular as there had previously been in going cosmopolitan, and an imitative quality informs the entire historical development (to every regionalized world its own *Mahābhārata)*—no unified theory may account for the manifold relations to the social and political domains in which this transformation took place. In the Kannada world, vernacularization was unquestionably a project both supported and directed by ruling elites, who simultaneously with the vernacular turn began to circumscribe their aspirations to transregional overlordship. The polity took on increasingly regionalized traits that seem congruent with the vernacular project. Yet the linkage between political and cultural transformation may not be easily homologized with what we find in, say, sixteenth-century France or Spain. Exclusivist, originary, ethnicist ideologies never arose in Karnataka before colonialism (even in modern Karnataka cultural nationalism is conspicuous by its absence). Nor did any Kannada writer, even while mounting so similar a defense and illustration of cosmopolitan vernacularism, ever aim at du Bellay's goal (a decade after Villers-Cotterêts) of producing a "Gallic Hercules" who would "draw the nations after him by their ears with a chain attached to his tongue."[51] This does not mean of course that all questions of power are absent the production of Kannada cultural difference—and it is difference that vernacularization produces, at the level of language, literature, and geoculture—for why create difference at all except within a field of power? It is only to say that at present we have neither an adequate account of the histories of vernacularization nor a theory of the culture-power relation open enough to the nonmodern to address these questions.

Yet these are questions, I would stress in concluding, that are worth pursuing. The age of vernacularity that commenced at the beginning of the millennium is ending at its close. Capitalist globalization—a form of transregional cultural change far more powerful and coercive than what marked the age of empires

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and civilizations—along with "fading states" and the emergence of new transnational political entities testify to this. The vernacular literary cultures that were the visible signs and substance of the great transition are everywhere disintegrating; an epoch of "postliteracy," as some name it, has begun, "where national languages take on the status of dead languages" and "make their appearance in the postmodern space only because they are out of work." Indian writers in English thus proclaim a new cosmopolitanism, and go so far as to declare, despite a vernacular millennium of literary production, that their "Indo-Anglian" literature constitutes "perhaps the most valuable contribution India has yet made to the world of books." And last, the territorialization of culture that began with vernacularization is being re-placed, literally, by cultures that will not stay in place, by "areas on the move" through migrations and diasporas; the cultures and peoples created during the vernacular epoch may persist, but it is no longer easy to find them as points on a map.[52]

It is precisely its imminent end—the dusk of Diana's owl—that enables us to grasp the fact that the vernacular millennium once began. And if we have a better sense of how it began, and a more discriminating account of its very different paths of development in different worlds, we may have a better understanding of why it is ending and where we may be headed, of what choices people made or did not make in the past and what may be available in the future. For if Wallerstein is right to predict that "the decline of the West, the decline of the American empire, the decline of capitalism" may offer the possibility "of creating a new and better historical system, provided we judge well," then he may also be right that "studying the operations of past historical systems without the distorting lens of linear universalism may well be an essential element in the struggle."[53]

ENDNOTES

[1]"Regional worlds" is a phrase adopted from the Ford Foundation post-area-studies project designed by Arjun Appadurai in collaboration with Steven Collins and myself (1996).

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[2]See Richard G. Fox, ed., *Realm and Region in Traditional India* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University, Program in Comparative Studies on Southern Asia, 1977), ix–xix. The question remains vital ("Orientalist" replacing "imperialist") in studies of early Southeast Asia; cf. Craig J. Reynolds, "A New Look at Old Southeast Asia," *Journal of Asian Studies* 54 (2) (1995): 429.

[3]See, for example, Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993); Sudipta Kaviraj, "The Imaginary Institution of India," in Partha Chatterjee and Gyanendra Pandey, eds., *Subaltern Studies VII* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1992).

[4]Compare Max Weber, *Economy and Society* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1978), 212–301.

[5]Clifford Geertz, "The Integrative Revolution: Primordial Sentiments and Civil Politics in the New States," in Clifford Geertz, ed., *Old Societies and New States: The Quest for Modernity in Asia and Africa* (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1963), 105–157. An anthropological critique that complements my historicist one is offered in Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis, Minn.: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 146–147.

[6]I mean something like the process of imagining in Benedict Anderson's imagined community, one only intensified by print-capitalism and by no means created by it.

[7]See O. W. Wolters, *Two Essay on Dai-Viet in the Fourteenth Century* (New Haven, Conn.: Council on Southeast Asia Studies, 1988), 27, vii, 31–32, and Nguyen The Anh, "Le Vietnam," in P. B. Lafont, ed., *Initiation à la peninsule indochinoise* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1996), 113–139. The arguments in Victor H. Mair, "Buddhism and the Rise of the Written Vernacular in East Asia," *Journal of Asian Studies* 53 (1994): 707–751, especially 722, do not hold for either Vietnam or other realms in southern Asia.

[8]See my essay, "The Sanskrit Cosmopolis, 300–1300," in Jan E. M. Houben, ed., *The Ideology and Status of Sanskrit* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 197–247, especially 201–217.

[9]Sanskrit's equally cosmopolitan cousins, Māhārāṣṭrī Prakrit and Apabhraṃśa, were also used, but restrictedly and (after A.D. 300) never for political texts.

[10]For detail on Kannada vernacularization see my article "The Cosmopolitan Vernacular," *Journal of Asian Studies* 57 (1) (1998): 19–28.

[11]*Kavirājamārgam* 1. 36–38.

[12]Compare Pollock, "The Cosmopolitan Vernacular," 15–16.

[13]On the early use of Telugu, see S. Nagaraju, "Emergence of Regional Identity and Beginnings of Vernacular Literature: A Case Study of Telugu," in Sheldon Pollock, ed., "Literary History, Region, and Nation in South Asia," *Social Scientist* 23 (1995): 8–23.

[14]The citations are from *Bhīmakhaṇḍamu* of Śrīnātha, and Nannecōḍuḍḍu's *Kumārasambhavamu*. I thank V. Narayana Rao for these references, and him and David Shulman for their translations.

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[15]From Iḷampūraṇar's commentary on the *Tolkāppiyam*; later commentators, as noted by Zvelebil (whose translation I cite here), extend the area. See Kamil Zvelebil, *Companion Studies to the History of Tamil Literature* (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 136.

[16]Charles Hallisey, "Sinhala Literary Culture in History" (unpublished manuscript).

[17]On *kakawin* see P. J. Zoetmulder, *Kalangwan: A Survey of Old Javanese Literature* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff), 1974, and on political allegory, S. O. Robson, "Kakawin Reconsidered," *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 139 (1983): 291–319. See also Robson's translation of the fourteenth-century *Desawarnana* ("Description of the Place") by Mpu Prapañca (Leiden: KITLV, 1995).

[18]These include the Sufis Baba Farid (d. 1266) and Daud of Jaunpur (fl. 1379). On the first see Christopher Shackle, "Early Vernacular Poetry in the Indus Valley," in Anna Libera Dallapiccola and Stephanie Zingel-Avé Lallemant, eds., *Islam and Indian Regions,* vol. 1 (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1993), 259–289.

[19]The characterization is that of R. S. McGregor "Viṣṇudās (A.D. 15c) and his Rāmāyaṇa-kathā" (unpublished manuscript).

[20]See, for example, Gérard Fussman, "Pouvoir central et régions dans l'Inde ancienne," *Annales ESC* (4) (1982): 621–647.

[21]Fox, *Realm and Region in Traditional India,* xxiii.

[22]Hermann Kulke, ed., *The State in India: 1000–1700* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1995) summarizes current debates and illustrates the conceptual disunity.

[23]Ibid., 262.

[24]Burton Stein, "Circulation and the Historical Geography of Tamil Country," *Journal of Asian Studies* 37 (1) (1977): 7–26.

[25]Eurasia-wide migrations of nomadic pastoralists during the period may have some bearing on these questions, but the linkage awaits clarification. See J. H. Bentley, "Cross-Cultural Interaction and Periodization in World History," *American Historical Review* 101 (3) (1996): 766–768; Jos Gommans, "The Eurasian Frontier After the First Millennium A.D.," *The Medieval History Journal* 1 (1) (1998): 125–143.

[26]Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991), 221.

[27]Compare the find-spot map in S. G. Tulpule, *Prācīna Marāthi Korīva Lekha* (Pune: Pune Vidyapith Prakashan, 1963), 47.

[28]B. R. Gopal, *The Chalukyas of Kalyana and the Kalachuris* (Dharwad: Karnatak University Press, 1981), 386.

[29]Contrast Kulke, *The State in India,* 242–262. The imperial ideal did not suddenly vanish, anymore than in post-Ottonian Europe, but faded slowly away with intermittent attempts at re-actualization.

[30]Pampa makes this claim in *Vikramārjunavijaya* 14.62.

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[31]Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power,* 221.

[32]George Holmes, ed., *The Oxford History of Medieval Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 327–328.

[33]M. T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record: England, 1066–1307,* 2d ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), 218. On the crucial role of the court see David Howlett, *The English Origins of Old French Literature* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1996), 165–166.

[34]Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from Cultural Writings* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991), 188, 168. (Similar if more learned is Erich Auerbach's view of the vernaculars struggling for emancipation from the tyranny of Latin; see his *Literary Language and its Public in Latin Antiquity and in the Middle Ages* [Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1965].) Ernst Robert Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990), viii, 383–388 (compare the epilogue by Peter Godman, 650–651). The "emergence" of the vernaculars is found in Robert Bartlett, *The Making of Europe: Conquest, Colonization, and Cultural Change, 950–1350* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993), 198. Corrections are offered in P. O. Kristeller, "The Origin and Development of the Language of Italian Prose," in *Renaissance Thought,* vol. 2 (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), 122.

[35]Except for the locale of vernacular theorization. This is expected where linguistic difference from the cosmopolitan code is greatest (as in South India); Europe is anomalous here. See Karl-Otto Apel, *Die Idee der Sprache in der Tradition des Humanismus von Dante bis Vico,* 3d ed. (Bonn: Bouvier, 1980), 104.

[36]Martin Irvine, *The Making of Textual Culture: "Grammatica" and Literary Theory, 350–1100* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 14, 415.

[37]See, respectively, John Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State,* 2d ed. (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 4, and Klaus Garber, ed., *Nation und Literatur im Europa der frühen Neuzeit* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1989), 12–13.

[38]For the Jacobin Abbé Gregoire, for example, France in 1794 was "at the Tower of Babel" and the new "truth" demanded a common language and "eradication of dialects." Compare R. D. Grillo, *Dominant Languages: Language and Hierarchy in Britain and France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 24.

[39]Hagen Schulze, *States, Nations and Nationalism: From the Middle Ages to the Present* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 130.

[40]The common view that finds "no question of a 'divorce' of religion and politics" in early India (André Wink, *Land and Sovereignty in India: Agrarian Society and Politics under the Eighteenth-century Maratha svarajya* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986], 16–17) exaggerates the importance of Brahmanical theory and mistakes that theory for what counted as "religion" in the four or five centuries before colonialism.

[41]Garber, *Nation und Literatur im Europa der frühen Neuzeit,* 36.

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[42]Schulze, *States, Nations and Nationalism,* 108.

[43]Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein, *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities* (London: Verso, 1992), 86–105. Presumably caste endogamy inhibited such integrative ethnicity at any level that really counted.

[44]Cited in Serge Lusignan, *Parler vulgairement: Les intellectuels et la langue française aux XIIIe et XIVe siècles* (Paris: Vrin, 1986), 111.

[45]Anthony D. Smith, "Towards a Global Culture?," in Mike Featherstone, ed., *Global Culture: Nationalism, Globalization and Modernity* (London: Sage, 1990), 184.

[46]Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983); Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983).

[47]Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism,* 141, 50, 10–12. His definition of "culture": "[A]n at least provisionally acceptable criterion of culture might be language." Ibid., 43.

[48]Other dimensions of the model have been challenged. See Stein Tønnesson and Hans Antlöv, *Asian Forms of the Nation* (London: Curzon Press, 1996), 6 (preindustrial education standardization); Prasenjit Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation: Questioning Narratives of Modern China* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 52ff. (a longer-term narrative of "nation"); Liah Greenfield, "Nationalism and Modernity," *Social Research* 63 (1) (1996): 3–40 (nationalism in sixteenth-century England); Daniel A. Segal and Richard Handler, "How European is Nationalism?" *Social Analysis* 32 (1992): 1–15 (the constitutive role of colonialism); and Otto Dann, ed., *Nationalismus in vorindustrieller Zeit* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1986).

[49]Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism,* 78–79, 10–12; Ernest Gellner, "Nationalism and Politics in Eastern Europe," *New Left Review* 189 (1991): 127–134; Anderson, *Imagined Communities,* 46–48. Gellner's principal case, Islam, carries an additional irony, for it enabled the vernacularization of numerous literary cultures, in India as early as 1100 (Mas'ud Sa'd Salman).

[50]Even "protonational" is disqualified by its teleology. Contrast E. J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 46–79.

[51]"Tirant les Peuples apres luy par leurs Oreilles avecques une Chesne attaché à sa Langue" (*La Deffence, et Illustration del Langue Françoyse,* ed. Versaillès 1887 [1549], 162).

[52]See, respectively, Appadurai, *Modernity at Large*; Susanne Hoeber Rudolph and James Piscatori, eds., *Transnational Religion and Fading States* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1996); Denis Hollier, "Literature as a Dead Language," in Marshall Brown, ed., *The Uses of Literary History* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1995), 239; Salman Rushdie, "Damme, This is the Oriental Scene for You!" *The New Yorker,* 23–30 June 1997, 50; Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson, "Beyond 'Culture': Space, Identity, and the Politics of Difference," *Current Anthropology* 7 (1992): 10.

[53]Immanuel Wallerstein, *Geopolitics and Geoculture: Essays on the Changing World-System* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 237.

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Sanjay Subrahmanyam

Hearing Voices: Vignettes of Early Modernity in South Asia, 1400–1750

Voilà les causes
des douleurs qui nous tourmentent.
Mais le bonheur n'a qu'une seule cause, l'équilibre.
Les jonctions équilibrées sont très difficiles à
réaliser.

—*Charakasamhitâ*[1]

I.

ABOUT THREE DECADES AGO, when the major post–World War II debates on the "roots of capitalism" (and thus, for some, the "roots of modernity") were underway, the place of South Asia in the history of Eurasia from the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries was made abundantly clear. This canonical position was defined by an important group of historians, who are sometimes referred to as the "Aligarh school" in India. Called upon by the American Economic History Association to participate in the "roots of capitalism" debate, together with a specialist of Tokugawa Japan, the leading Ottoman historian of the day, and a historian of Mamluk and post-Mamluk Egypt, the South Asian statement was formulated by Irfan Habib.[2] South Asia was dominated from the twelfth century, but more particularly after the establishment of the Mughal dynasty in the sixteenth century, by a powerful elite that drew resources essentially from the land. One part of this elite (the

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zamîndârs) was relatively close to the rural sites of production; others (called *iqtaᶜdârs* in the pre-1550 period and *mansabdârs* and *jâgîrdârs* after about 1580) were essentially urban residents. By extracting the "entire surplus" of the peasantry, this rapacious elite permitted nothing more than the simple reproduction of peasant communities, confined to their village habitats. This surplus was then traded through a merchant class that was entirely subservient to and dependent on landed interests. The landed elite itself was given to a life of conspicuous consumption (and the accumulation of precious metals) in such a manner that the surplus was always utilized "unproductively." Technological change was impossible. Locked unremittingly into this system, South Asia was only wrenched from it by colonial rule—which was thus ironically seen in the long run as a "progressive" force.

Despite his statement's relationship to Marx's celebrated newspaper articles written in the aftermath of 1857, Irfan Habib was careful to distinguish this vision from the so-called "Asiatic Mode of Production" and from Karl Wittfogel's formulation of "Oriental Despotism."[3] Yet his stark vision was in dramatic contrast to the more nuanced picture presented (already in 1969) for Tokugawa Japan or the Ottomans.[4] This point of departure for India was used by a generation of comparative scholars. Perry Anderson's debt to Habib is evident in the chapters of *Lineages of the Absolutist State* that deal with India, as is that of Fernand Braudel and Immanuel Wallerstein.[5] Eric Wolf, in *Europe and the People without History,* does not substantially differ from it either, and structural anthropologists of the school of Louis Dumont obviously could have found much to applaud here, not least the view that nothing of essence changed between the classical India described in normative texts and British colonial ethnography.[6] On the other hand, South Asia was permitted to participate in the debate but Southeast Asia was entirely left out, and when some Southeast Asianists belatedly came to the issue in the 1980s, their formulations echoed that of Habib in a remarkable fashion.

While the debate referred to above is ostensibly about economic history, its ramifications extend, in fact, to history in general. The mode of analysis adopted by Habib is consonant

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with the overarching conception that still prevails in South Asian schools and universities of a "medieval India" that extends in an unbroken fashion from the twelfth to the eighteenth century, "modern India" beginning with colonial rule. In view of the particular Marxist presuppositions of the Aligarh school, superstructural developments were also directly inferred once the economic bases of the social formation had been defined. A coherent, and congealed, picture thus emerged with respect to architecture, painting, literature, and even socioreligious movements.[7] Furthermore, for once the Weberian position (espoused in India for the most part by American-trained historians of the 1960s) more or less jelled with the Marxist vision, save in terms of minor details.[8] Some recent scholars, such as Hermann Kulke, have attempted to gain more intellectual mileage out of Weberian constructs concerning "Hinduization," in particular, and "legitimation," more generally, where precolonial Indian kingdoms are concerned, but the results have been less than convincing.[9]

The 1969 debate (or nondebate) thus defined the state of the art into the 1980s. However, in recent years, rumblings were heard from certain quarters as a number of distinct attempts were made to address the related problems for South Asia of institutional evolution and "historical anthropology" in the context of the period from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries. That is to say, rather than focusing exclusively on the building of the colonial empires of the late eighteenth century and sweeping all earlier developments under the carpet of "traditional society," making it amenable to analysis with the familiar tools of structural anthropology, various historians have attempted to seek a dynamic (or better still, a series of dynamics) within which to pose a rather substantial slice of time, supplied moreover with a considerable body of source materials.[10]

In this essay, I will seek to sum up some of the major developments in this recent historiography, point to internal contradictions where they exist, and then propose some further lines of research drawing on my own (often collaborative) work in progress. As we shall see, the coverage must of necessity be uneven, but we are still quite far from the happy certainties of the 1960s and early 1970s.

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II.

Let us begin with reference to a region where I have worked intermittently for several years, which has the advantage of a rich historiography—the region of Tanjavur, the delta of the river Kaveri, in southeastern India. Conventionally recognized as one of the stable "cores" of Indian society (continuously inhabited over several millennia), Tanjavur is often identified as the core of Tamil society—the breast that nourishes the Tamil culture in the usual metaphor. My purpose in scaling the discussion down from rather wide horizons to a single region is obvious enough: to be able to locate the sort of social processes in which we are interested, we are rapidly pushed in the direction of a "microanalysis," which is impossible on the scale of a zone as large as South Asia or Southeast Asia.[11]

Let us be clear, however, that Tanjavur is not being posed here as a "representative" region. Certainly, when historians of northern India, such as Irfan Habib, launched their grand generalizations concerning the "potentialities of capitalistic development" in South Asia, the region was far from their minds; to them, the quintessence of South Asia was to be found instead in the Gangetic plain, and more particularly in the Ganges-Jamuna *doâb*. Where southern India is concerned, Tanjavur undoubtedly has special status as a region with a dense, ethnically stable population and a high concentration of urban centers (often the sites of prestigious temples); it is, moreover, an area that is usually identified—to my mind somewhat erroneously—with "Hindu" India. A comparison of Tanjavur with the region of Tirunelveli further south (the subject of a very useful *longue durée* study by David Ludden) shows that, if anything, the characteristics of Tanjavur agrarian society are atypical by the standards of Tamilnadu, where ecotypes tend to be far more mixed, migration movements far more important, and social mobility far more extensive than is the case in the Kaveri delta.[12]

So much by way of a note of caution. The early history of Tanjavur (before the sixth century C.E.) is somewhat obscure, and one must often make recourse to literary texts of the so-called Sangam corpus to shed light on the functioning of social relations in this region. After the sixth century, we are able to

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operate on a dual track, supplementing increasingly elaborate literary materials with stone inscriptions from temples, irrigation tanks, and other sites. We have thus been in a position since the early twentieth century to have a sense of the processes of urbanization, temple building concomitant with the growth of a vocabulary of a new sectarian (Shaiva, Krishnaite—later Vaishnava) devotionalism, the creation of a state (that of the Cholas) with a core in Tanjavur from about the ninth century, and a rather elaborate network of contacts extending to Kerala, Sri Lanka, and Southeast Asia. It is conventional, and I believe justifiable, to term this moment in the history of Tanjavur as "medieval," and the society that we encounter bears resemblance to what one finds not only in Europe but in Buddhist-dominated Sri Lanka in the same epoch, and also arguably in southern China under the Songs. Certain aspects of the society in Tanjavur described during the epoch have been much debated in recent years, and the extent of state centralization has in particular been a center of heated debate between proponents of the "segmentary state" theory and its rather diverse opponents.[13] If one extreme view (held by the disciples of K. A. Nilakantha Sastri) proposes that the Chola dynasty ran a highly bureaucratized state, with a powerful military and naval apparatus, capable of launching expeditions to Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia, others see the Chola state as weakly centered on a limited core region, garnering resources from raiding that were then used to build the monumental temples by which the dynasty is best remembered. Still other writers, partial to a revived version of the Asiatic Mode of Production, place great emphasis on corvée labor on the one hand and the control of irrigation on the other.[14]

It would appear that the debate is a rather overdrawn one and that its dialectics have forced the proponents of the two polar positions into ever more extreme formulations. A sensible alternative is proposed by writers such as Y. Subbarayalu and E. James Heitzman, who argue that the four centuries of the Chola dynasty's rule (from the ninth to the thirteenth centuries) are marked by a fairly typical cycle of changes, reflected in the inscriptional record as well.[15] We can thus find a phase of expansion from a limited core, the reproduction of terminolo-

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gies and institutional arrangements on a wider scale, and then a phase of retraction in terms of power relations, which leaves many of the institutional arrangements even in the "outlying areas" superficially intact. The inscriptions, which speak of collective bodies of elites, such as the *nâṭṭâr* and *periyanâṭṭâr*, continue to use the same terminology, while the content of these terms gradually evolves.

The problem of the institutional field, as it existed in these centuries, has been barely touched upon in the debate on the nature of the state. From indirect references, and from the sole full-length study (by David Shulman) that seeks to take these questions seriously, one gathers the importance of certain conventions of categorization of both social space and its representation.[16] From very early on, that is, from the Sangam corpus, Tamil literary writings distinguished *akam* from *puṟam*—the first concerned with an "inner" or "private" realm, with its particular vocabulary and landscapes, the second with "the world of action," the court and the battlefield, in brief, with a more "public" sphere. A recognition of the existence of this very precocious distinction, which persists moreover in the form of an informing convention, is crucial in order for us not to be excessively naive about the specifically European, and modern, trajectory of the public/private distinction. To be sure, *akam* and *puṟam* are permeable categories, and a considerable space for play is afforded by stretching their limits or combining them in one or the other form. Their associations—the former with nighttime, the latter with the day, *akam* with interiors and *puṟam* with exteriors—afford a series of creative tensions that have been exploited in a variety of ways in the representation of social space and social situations.

Chola texts insist on the role of the king as the upholder of the social and moral order, as a protector who justifies his levies (*rakshabhoga*) by the fact that he ensures the continuation of a certain hierarchical structuration of society (*varṇâshramadharma*). These are conventional claims, often bodily lifted and inserted into inscriptional texts from classical Sanskrit precedents. In this, the Cholas do not differ substantially from the Pallavas, who ruled in an earlier period over a region somewhat to the north of the Kaveri delta. One notable difference, however, is

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that the Cholas seem to model their ideal ruler around the figure of Rama, a fact reflected as much in literary texts as in genealogical inscriptions. The political actions that form the equivalent of this claim include the gifting of villages to Brahmins (the *brahmadeya*) and the intervention of royalty as donor—the major theme of a large proportion of extant inscriptions.

However, the issue remains of how disputes over access to resources and status as well as relations between individuals and social groups were resolved. A frequently cited literary passage that sheds light on these questions is Chekkilar's description in the *Periya Purâṇam* of how the god Shiva appeared at the wedding ceremony of his devotee, Suntaramurttinayanar, to claim him as his bond-servant (*aṭimai*); the matter is said to have been placed before the *sabhâ* (assembly) of the (presumably *brahmadeya*) village of Tiruvenneynallur, with palm-leaf documents (*âvaṇam*), and eyewitnesses produced, and so on. The point, however, is that the matter was resolved locally, in keeping with prescriptions from classical, normative, and legal texts, the *dharmashâstras*.[17] If we take this example seriously, as well as a handful of others analyzed by historians such as J. D. M. Derrett, we are left with two impressions: first, that the Chola state itself played a minimal role in regulating disputes, instead leaving the matter in the hands of local assemblies and bodies; and second, that these assemblies applied classical precedents, derived in essence from a pan-Indian tradition (with historical roots very largely in north India).[18] The weight of Brahmins and Brahminical opinion at all stages of this process is moreover emphasised.

And what of "caste"? Analyzing a corpus of inscriptions that comes from the Andhra region, and which derive from a slightly later period (twelfth to fourteenth centuries), Cynthia Talbot has argued that too much has been made of "caste" (*jâti*) as a marker of identity. She notes that in identifications of major figures featured in the Telugu/Sanskrit inscriptions at her disposal, which mostly derive from the region ruled over by the Kakatiya dynasty, *jâti* is scarcely referred to. This is a rather puzzling feature that flies in the face of standard Indological readings of India's past. Instead, Talbot finds attributes of lineage, family, and personal prowess to be far more important as

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markers of an individual's location in the social space defined by the inscription's notional audience.[19] Further south, in the Chola country, one gathers that the *varṇa* status of rulers continued to be a preoccupation; some are known to have performed the *hiraṇyagarbha* ceremony, where they were inserted into a large womb-like gold vessel, subsequently emerged "reborn," and thus became possessed of *kshatriya* status.

In Tanjavur itself, it is our impression that many of these normative features, defining the comportment and status of individuals in the space of *puṟam*, came to change rather dramatically in the postmedieval centuries. In the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, the Tanjavur region came gradually to be incorporated into a political structure that derived from the north, the so-called Vijayanagara (or Karnataka) state. There is evidence that this process of incorporation occasioned some conflict between representatives (*adhikâris*) of Vijayanagara and local institutions. By the early sixteenth century, a new configuration emerged in Tanjavur with the foundation there of a lineage of *nâyaka* rulers, who while never declaring a total autonomy from the Vijayanagara center nevertheless sought to exercise it in various forms.

The Nayakas in Tanjavur (as also in Madurai and Senji, other centers ruled over by distinct Nayaka lineages) attempted to cut themselves adrift of their moorings in a received ideology of kingship.[20] Propelled by new possibilities in the trading sphere (both internal trade and seaborne trade that was only partly in European hands), these rulers exploited the ambiguous social space between trade and landed power. They sought to create a personalized idiom of rule, focusing among other things on the displacement of the traditional legitimizing link between king and temple with a rather different and more ambitious conception of "divine" kingship in which the ruler was presented variously as *avatâra*, possessing the powers to intervene in the affairs of the gods, and as a *shûdra*, who nevertheless ruled by virtue of his control over liquid resources (*dravya*). Nayaka society in Tanjavur appears to have been awash in wealth—publicly displayed and consumed by these nouveaux-riches kings, utilized by them publicly to feed Brahmins in the

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ubiquitous *annadâna* ceremony of the epoch, and even treated as the appropriate nexus with which to deal with God.

These were obviously idioms of excess, paradoxically linked to a political structure whose power was, to put it mildly, weakly articulated in the external sphere, whether on the battlefield or in terms of diplomacy. The Nayakas also suffered periodically from crises of confidence, drawing then on older devices, whether the *hiraṇyagarbha* mentioned above, or the older vocabulary of the king prostrating himself before the god. The curious relationship of the last Nayaka ruler of Tanjavur, Vijayaraghava (r. 1634–1673) with two temples, Mannargudi and Srirangam, sums up this tussle between the desire for the new and the gravitational pull of the old.

The processes that we have identified as characteristic of the Nayakas may well sound familiar to historians of other early modern societies: the *mise en valeur* of fiscal resources through trade, the drive to seek new sources of legitimation, thus opening up new public spaces (the more or less permanent "choultry" or eating house that was also the site of the *annadâna*, the annual space of the festival) where such claims could be articulated and defended. An examination of the architectural remains of such major Nayaka sites as Senji (north of Tanjavur) reveals the existence of a number of substantial buildings of a "public" type, seemingly unknown from before these times. These included not only the great public granaries but such sites as the celebrated *kalyâṇa mahal* of Senji (replicated in Tanjavur, as well as in the Rayalasima further north) and the whole complex directly associated with the court (*saṁsthâna*, or later *kachehri*).

The processes that I have described above also find their counterpart in a new "anthropology," in a preoccupation with the body and its regeneration (themes that are central to semiliterary genres of the epoch like the *noṇṭinâṭakam*, or "cripple's play"), and are also linked to the privileged use of the female voice (even by male authors), to articulate a series of themes of violation and transgression in the social sphere.[21] Some of these preoccupations were then carried over in Tanjavur into the post-Nayaka period, when the region was conquered and ruled over by the Bhonsle dynasty of Marathas, deriving from western India.

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The Bhonsles of Tanjavur, who ruled from about 1676 to 1799 and continued thereafter for another half-century as figureheads under early colonial rule, represent a particularly interesting and little-studied moment in Tanjavur's history. Recently, I have argued that their fiscal system gradually collapsed over the eighteenth century under the pressure of new military demands that emptied their treasury and their need—as recent arrivals from the north—to legitimate their role through certain forms of donation and revenue-alienation.[22] These problems were particularly serious from about 1740 onwards, though I do not believe that one should seek to link this directly with the rise in that period of relatively "conservative" forms of socioreligious expression (the cult of Rama, in particular), whose explanation must lie in large measure elsewhere.

Of particular interest in this respect is a sort of "hinge" moment between the Nayakas and the quintessential Maratha rule: this is the period of the ruler Shahaji Bhonsle (r. 1684–1712). In the paragraphs that follow I shall focus on a text by him entitled *Satidânashûramu*, "The Gifting of the Virtuous Wife," which is both about and meant to be performed in the annual festival of the Rajagopalasvami temple at Mannargudi, and which seems to provide a rather convenient wedge into our set of problematics.[23] The play is in Telugu, the language brought into the Tanjavur region by the Nayakas and continued to an extent by the Bhonsles, whose own native language was Marathi. The court was obviously a polyglot one, and another text by Shahaji, called *Pañchabhâshavilâsanâṭakam*, celebrates this by alternating the use of five languages: Tamil, Telugu, Marathi, Sanskrit, and a form of Braj Bhasha.

Our play, the *Satidânashûramu*, opens with the following summary by the Story Manager (*sûtradhara*):

> A Brahmin comes to see the Vishnu festival.
> He falls in love with an Outcaste woman,
> and chats her up. Her husband arrives,
> hears these words, and agrees to give away
> his wife. As they are arguing, Shiva arrives
> and liberates all four. The play celebrating
> this story was made by King Shaha
> to outlast the sun, moon and stars.

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In a fell stroke, we have political order, the public sphere, and collective identity all rolled into one: a royal play, located in its ostensible action and locus of performance in the public space of a temple festival, that addresses the issue of transgression of the *varṇâshramadharma*, the set of principles that notionally is supposed to give smaller collectives within society, and the larger collective that is society, their identities.

But there is more to the story than the introduction would have us know. Once the god Ganapati, remover of obstacles, has come by riding his rat, the god Rajagopala is announced preceded by a herald clown and accompanied by his consort Lakshmi. So far, nothing untoward has happened. The action now moves on to the festival itself, focusing on an outcaste (Madiga) woman who has come to pray before the god, and whose charms are thus visible to all eyes.

> Her feet tender as leafbuds
> with toe-rings and other ornaments,
> bracelets and bells chiming,
> a cynosure for all eyes in the universe,
> a row of bells hanging from a golden string
> around her buttocks, and chain of emeralds,
> she is as brilliant as the sun.
> Her eyes black with mascara,
> a dot of musk on her forehead,
> she has a companion on either side
> and a single purpose—to see the festival.

The Matangi (feminine of Madiga) is espied by a Telugu Brahmin, Marobhatlu, a great specialist on the Vedas and scriptures, who has come, accompanied by a disciple, to see the festival ; he instantly falls in love with her. Singing and dancing, he invites the ridicule of his disciple and alternates his lovesick cries in Telugu with learned verses in Sanskrit, to which the disciple is obliged to respond in the same currency. The play thus develops rapidly into a dialogue between these two learned Brahmins, the guru's high-flown erotic lyricism being periodically punctured by the disciple's crude literalism. When the former waxes eloquent over the physical attributes and jewels of the Outcaste woman, the latter replies (in Sanskrit, with a Telugu explanation provided thereafter):

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> They see her face dripping with snot and compare it to the moon.
> Her breasts, just balls of flesh, are said to be golden pitchers. Her
> buttocks, filthy with shit and urine, are like an elephant's head.
> This horrible female form is celebrated by poets. You, and they,
> are crazy—not me.

But the Brahmin is not discouraged by the potential transgression in terms of caste, or by the fact that the woman is married, or even by the fact that he has his own wife and children at home. When the pupil, drawing in part on classical Buddhist renunciatory images, assures him that Woman is "a whirlpool of doubts; a house of disobedience; a city of adventure; always close to trouble," and the obstacle to Eternal Bliss, the guru replies that he has "no use for insipid, eternal bliss."[24] He then adds a sound argument from the theory of substances and humors: "People like us, who feed on good rice, fresh ghee, milk and curds have no hope of self-control any more than the Vindhya Mountains can float over the sea." Berating the love god, Kama, and the moon for tormenting him, Marobhatlu then holds forth in a poetic vein on his sufferings, eventually persuading his disciple to approach the Matangi on his behalf. The disciple approaches the woman with trepidation but is sharply rebuffed; the guru hence decides that he has to do the seduction himself. Coming up to the Matangi, he begins,

> May you have pleasure, and many children.
> You have beautiful eyes. Listen to me.
> Where are you from? What is your name?
> What caste are you? Tell me, please.
> Your charm has reduced me to ashes.
> Please talk to me.

We have the rapid movement here from the first line, where the Brahmin's venerable blessing actually carries a double meaning, to outright flattery, but then the near-imperceptible slide into the question of markers of identity—place, name, caste. The pupil finds his master's attempts at seduction pathetic, "like an elephant talking to a goat." The Matangi, on the other hand, is alarmed, and replies:

> We're Untouchables. If you touch us, you become unclean.
> Don't come close. We're Madigas, working with leather.

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Our huts are to the east of the village.
Everybody abuses us, and you're a Brahmin.
We eat beef, we drink liquor.
We don't know how to talk with respect.
Don't talk to me.

But the Brahmin has a way of deftly turning the argument around. He replies, "You said you're Untouchable, but there's no blame in that. We are also Untouchable." He means, of course, that untouchability is a mutual phenomenon: if the Brahmin cannot touch the Untouchable, nor can the latter touch the former. He continues in the same vein:

You said you shouldn't be touched, which means
you're pure as fire. All I want is to touch you.
You said you're beyond caste
so you must be the highest of all.
You said nobody can touch you. I'm for that.
No-one, that is, except for me.
You said you deal in animal skins.
Are you any different from Lord Shiva?
We drink cow's milk, but you eat the whole cow.
You must be more pure.

This is really too much for the pupil, who retorts sarcastically, "Do babies who drink their mother's milk eat the whole mother?" The Brahmin guru is unabashed and prattles on with what he imagines to be his seductive talk, which is rebuffed by the Matangi with paradoxically high-sounding philosophy. After all, she tells him solemnly, the Brahmin has the transcendent task of preserving order in the world, whereas the pleasures and preoccupations of the mere body are impermanent; by transgressing the most extreme of caste boundaries, he actually risks causing cosmic chaos. But the Brahmin replies, "Caste makes no difference. It's qualities that count," and adds, "Does anyone throw away pearls just because they're born out of an oyster?"

The situation has reached an impasse, and the Matangi now tries another tack, threatening the Brahmin with the wrath of her husband. The pupil adds his pleas to hers, insisting that the Brahmin has no right to commit adultery. But Marobhatlu is cynical enough to find a solution to this as well. He replies:

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> We Brahmins have made up all the rules,
> and invented religion. There is no better *dharma*
> than satisfying a Brahmin's desire.
> Don't run away from me, be kind to me.
> Great merit will be yours.

He compares the sexual favors she can confer on him with the traditional gifts (*dâna*) given to Brahmins to gain merit, namely, golden vessels, land, and houses. At this stage, the muscular husband of the Matangi arrives; he is ominously named Single Tiger. He is drunk on toddy, and when he arrives he is seen to be twirling his moustache. The pupil panics and wants to flee, but the guru is too drunk on love to do that. Instead, he faces up to the Madiga husband, who meanwhile has begun to reproach his wife for having left affairs in a half-done state at home. She complains about the Brahmin who has been pestering her, while the Brahmin, oblivious to the circumstances, continues to recite reproachful erotic verses to her in Sanskrit before the Madiga's very eyes.

A scuffle ensues in which the pupil attempts to protect his guru. A curious discussion then begins, with the Madiga and the pupil exchanging learned quotations in Sanskrit and trading exegeses on ethical matters. The Madiga defends the notion of honor that requires him to take the Brahmin to task, but the pupil pleads that he and his teacher are unarmed and hence cannot be treated violently. The guru, impatient, intervenes, insisting that he is merely following the Code of Desire; besides, if Brahmins perform sacrifices to reach the courtesans of the Gods, do they not have the right to do the same on earth?

A complete inversion now takes place, as the Madiga begins to lecture the Brahmin in Sanskrit verse (followed by a prose Telugu translation) on ethics, self-control, and the transient nature of life. But the Brahmin is still totally unabashed, and retorts:

> Final freedom is that state of no pain,
> no pleasure, no qualities, nothing—
> or so some idiot said.
> But when a ravishing young woman,
> drunk on desire,

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is free from her clothes—
that's freedom
for me.

The three-cornered argument between Madiga, teacher, and pupil continues; the woman, meanwhile, has fallen silent. At last, the Madiga is impressed by the Brahmin's single-mindedness of purpose, his willingness to give up his life and all his accumulated virtue just for the sake of the Matangi. He hence decides to undertake the great sacrifice that is called for from him, and declares:

You don't have to beg, Brahmin.
I'll donate my wife to you.
Didn't Harishchandra, one of my people,
sell his wife for truth?
We have a reputation for giving gifts.
I would give you my life itself,
were you to ask, to say nothing
of my wife.

The transgression of caste is thus authorized precisely in the name of Brahminical caste ideology: for what greater virtue for an Untouchable than to make a gift to a Brahmin? The Brahmin at last realizes when faced with this action that his pupil is right; he has been treading the wrong path. Meditatively, he stands up and bows, thanking his pupil, and then praises the Madiga for his generosity. However, he says, he must now refuse the gift. The Madiga protests; having made the promise of the gift, he must carry his intention through, since for him it is now a matter of his fame and honor. The Brahmin is caught in a bind and prays to God to save him; the Madiga and the Matangi each address their prayers to Shiva, pleading with him. The Matangi's rather down-to-earth prayer runs:

My life has become miserable
The Brahmin has turned words upside down.
My husband with his foggy mind,
pushes me away. If I say I won't go,
he'll hit me.
The Brahmin abuses me, tells me not to come.
My husband wants me to go.

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> The branch I was holding is broken,
> and the branch I reached for is broken too.
> Help me, Shiva, with a mountain for your bow.

Finally, the pupil too addresses the god, and this at last turns the scales. The god and his consort, Parvati, arrive on the bull, Nandi, and blesses them all: the Madiga for his gift-giving nature, the Brahmin (since his *dharma* is, after all, still intact), the Matangi whose virtue remains unsullied, and the student who saved his teacher. Each of them is given an aspect of the god's grace: *sâyujya* (communion with the Divine) for the Brahmin, *sarûpya* (similarity in form) for the Madiga, *samîpya* (nearness) for the Matangi, and *sâlokya* (residence in heaven) for the pupil, and they are all "saved." The play ends with a word for the watcher:

> And you, who have seen this play,
> decide for yourselves and tell us:
> who, among these four,
> is the best?

Literary materials of the type summarized above have usually fallen between two camps in Indian studies: traditional historians disdain them, preferring the "reliable evidence" of inscriptions and "historical texts," while Indologists are uninterested in reading them from the angle of social and cultural history and the history of mentalities. Those attitudes have begun to change in recent times, but only slowly.

Let us then rapidly sum up for our own purposes the most interesting aspects of this richly textured play. First, it is worth repeating that the play was written in the early eighteenth century by the ruling monarch in Tanjavur for public performance in the annual festival at Mannargudi. As such, it has the effect of attempting to unite the opposites, with the decisive intervention of Shiva in this Vaishnava temple festival being only one of these deft twists. The two ends of the caste spectrum, the Brahmin and the Untouchable, are brought together in a joint salvation at the end of the text, and we (the spectators) are left to sort out how we are to rank these actors' virtues. To be sure, the text does not turn caste ideology upside down; nor should it be read, save in a very tortuous way, as a precursor of twentieth-century novels

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such as U. R. Anantamurthy's *Saṁskâra*, in which a morally upright Kannada Brahmin from an *agrahâra* (Brahmin settlement) seduces an Untouchable woman. The *Satidânashûramu* tantalizes, proposes, but does not eventually transgress—nor could it, in view of the identity of its author.

It is worth reading this text in the light of such earlier works as Purushottama Dikshitudu's *Annadânamahânâṭakamu* of the seventeenth century, which contains similar elements of parody but remains partly mortgaged to the system of values that it mocks. The *Satidânashûramu* goes further in some respects, and some of its verses can be read as a truly cynical and trenchant commentary in a court that is usually seen as the last word in pious Brahmanical orthodoxy.

The "ends" here also serve to test the "means"; that is, the extremes of the caste hierarchy are used to reflect a situation of considerable social flux in which the middle-level castes still found themselves in the first half of the eighteenth century. In the eighteenth century, erstwhile marginal groups such as the Kallars and Maravars were gaining an increasingly prominent position in the society of Tanjavur and its environs and were also concomitantly making an appearance in the public arena by means of new theatrical and performance genres. We have already mentioned the *noṇṭinâṭakam*, or "cripple's play," whose hero is usually a Kallar; also remarkable from this period are texts such as the *kuravañchi nâṭakams*, featuring erstwhile marginal groups in an increasingly prominent role. Various aspects of such texts merit our attention: the rise (and, in part, the revival) of a certain "naturalism" in language and dialectal forms and the repeated mention of certain well-defined public arenas—such as the court, the festival-ground, the fortress, or the battlefield—where different groups are allowed to play out and define their changing roles.

One of the notable features of these texts, even in the far south, is the implicit recognition of linguistic diversity, the result of an intensified set of processes of elite circulation. The fifteenth and sixteenth centuries had already seen the move into the Tamil country of Telugu and Kannada speakers; in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Persian, Deccani (a form of "Hindi"), and Marathi would be added. Even Gujarati was

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carried into the region with the migration of specialized silk weavers (*paṭṭunûlkârar*), bankers, and jewel traders, who financed warfare, channeled temple funds into likely financial ventures, and greased the wheels of commerce through bills of exchange (*huṇḍîs*). Naturally, the great centers of pilgrimage and pilgrimage routes (many of which found elaborate articulation in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries) were an important field of action for these merchant-banker information agents.

Our attention has been drawn to the role of these groups and to the circuits of information and knowledge in which they were embedded by the recent work of C. A. Bayly. Bayly has argued that the transition in India to the colonial order from the last quarter of the eighteenth century onwards should be seen not only in terms of military conquest but also in terms of the takeover by the British of indigenous systems of intelligence gathering and social communication.[25] Among the aspects on which he focuses is the role of information agents, often with a commercial role, but equally at the service of states. Thus states like Maratha Tanjavur had, at the level of each major locality, elaborate systems of *harakâras* (literally, "do-alls"), i.e., messengers and information-gatherers, who acted together with the system of "writers" (*munshîs*, *wâqi'anawîs*) and bankers (*sâhukârs*). In the interstate system that linked Tanjavur with, say, Ramnad, Pudukkottai, and Sivaganga on the one hand, and Arcot and Hyderabad in the north on the other, each state maintained agents (*wakîls*) in the others' court to report on the goings-on in the public domain. Some of these *wakîl* reports, or *akhbârâts*, have been published, and from them we have a sense of what constituted the domain of information in which the letter writer was supposed to interest himself: military news and court-factions, but also gossip, scandals, public disturbances, and so on. Had the scandalous dalliance between Marobhatlu and the Madiga woman in fact occurred, perhaps it would have found its way into the reports written by the *wakîl* of the Peshwa in Tanjavur to his master in Pune.

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III.

The bulk of discussion of the "public sphere" in South Asia has concentrated on the colonial period, and has had as its implicit (and occasionally explicit) assumption that both the thing itself and reflection on the question were introduced into South Asia by the British. If this were true, it would be of a piece with Jürgen Habermas's own conception, which as Bayly has recently noted is "at root. . .a scientific version of Whig modernization theory."[26] However, Bayly, after noting that "the most interesting discussions of the concept of 'public' among the wider Indian population have concentrated on public *space* and its use," has gone on to suggest that it might be useful to delineate what he terms an Indian "ecumene," already in the precolonial period, in which political theory, individuality, rationality and social communication (all of which play crucial roles in Habermas's formulation) found "equivalents."[27]

While partly sympathetic to Bayly's propositions, I have chosen not to engage here in a debate on these terms. It seems somewhat fruitless to search for the equivalent in empirical materials for a formulation developed by social philosophers, whose very training precludes an openness to non-Western situations. The point is surely not to attempt again to slot South and Southeast Asia into the rank order of some developmental schema, where the top of the list is held by Britain and the rest of Western Europe. Instead, what I shall attempt here is to discuss the terms of "public" political discussion in South Asia, and the positioning of the individual voice in relation to these, before finally turning to some comparative reflections on the question of modernity.

Colonial classifications of "Oriental knowledge" attempted from early on to separate South Asian intellectual traditions into those deriving from Sanskrit and those deriving from Arabo-Persian. At first, the latter had the advantage, since the vocabulary of administration that the East India Company found all over late eighteenth-century South Asia seemed to derive from the marriage of Persian to the vernaculars. Gradually, however, Sanskrit gained ascendancy in terms of its greater "rootedness" in India, and thus its ostensible authenticity in representing

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India. Since Orientalists from the second generation after the foundation of the Asiatic Society in Calcutta usually chose between a training in these two traditions, the cleavage that already existed between Brahmanic knowledge and that of the Maulavi was reinforced. It was forgotten, at least temporarily, that the bulk of the texts that the British had collected in the first decades of their rule, which in part represented varying and contested interpretations of South Asia's past and present, fell between these traditions.

We can get a clearer sense of this by looking more closely at materials concerning statecraft, *siyâsat* or *râjanîti*, though etymologically the two terms are not precisely congruent. It is, of course, true that those in India who wrote in Persian within the tradition that came to be called *akhlâq* often located their arguments textually within a tradition that extended into Iran and especially Central Asia. Between the two poles identified by analysts such as Muzaffar Alam—one seeking within a theological framework of *dîndârî* to impose a narrow interpretation of Islamic comportment on Indian peasants and townsmen, and the other, more "realistic," arguing that a long tradition (from the Mongols onwards) existed of an accomodation between rulers and subjects who did not share a common religion—the variety of Indo-Islamic *akhlâq* writers found distinct points of anchorage.[28] These were, I should stress, public arguments, carried out by town-based literati, and circulated in the form of manuscripts that found approbation or rebuttal from their readers. Some of these texts, the most prestigious ones, would—in India, as elsewhere in the Islamic world—find their way into the curricula of *madrasas*, where would-be writers of other such treatises cut their teeth.

However, we should not imagine a "public culture" of elite discourse that was perfectly split down the middle—the Muslims (whether migrants from Iran and Central Asia, or local converts, or descendants of migrants) on the one hand, and the Hindus on the other. On the contrary, there is every indication that access to Persian and even Arabic was available to elite Hindus from scribal and warrior groups. Some of them emerged as major poets and literati from the sixteenth century onwards, others took scribal employment with the Mughals in the house-

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holds of notables or in other states (either rivals of, or successors to, the Mughals). They carried with them a common culture of bookkeeping and state accountancy, transmitted notions of order and balance within a state that came out of treatises of statecraft, and copied and produced manuscripts in the hundreds of thousands, whose dimensions scholars have barely begun to explore.

Relatively well known among such public figures, with scribal and trading origins, is the Delhi-based Anand Ram "Mukhlis" (1697–1751), a poet, lexicographer, prose stylist, and courtier from the time of the later Mughals. Mukhlis, who was a cosmopolitan figure, may be compared to another merchant with literary pretensions from a century and a half earlier, the Jain merchant Banarasidas, who left behind an autobiography in verse, entitled *Ardhakathânak* ("Half a Story"), written in Braj Bhasha. Banarasidas's text is a somewhat morose tale of failures in business, with periods of whoremongering alternating with phases of remorse; but it is interesting to note that he locates his own life explicitly in that of his caste—a Jain trading group from northern India.[29] Also of note is the fact that Banarasidas is careful to use great public events as markers in his own life, noting, for example, the effect that the death of Akbar had on the expectations of merchants in the town in which he resided. Thus rather than a purely private reflection, the text alternates philosophical introspection with an orientation to the exterior, defining Banarasidas's own individuality in relation to the expectations of community and family (both of which he failed signally to live up to).

While Banarasidas knew Persian, he chose to write in Braj Bhasha, no doubt intending his text to be read principally within his own family environs. Mukhlis, on the other hand, though he sometimes wrote in the mixed Persian-Hindavi that was called *rekhta*, and though he certainly spoke some form of Hindi vernacular at home, chose Persian as his language of expression. It was in this language that he wrote the extensive chronicle and memoir called *Badâ'iᶜ Waqâ'iᶜ*, recounting among other things life in Delhi before and after the invasion by the Iranian conqueror Nadir Shah (1739).

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To have a sense of Anand Ram's view of the world, it is perhaps useful to look at another of his texts, the *Ahwâl-i Safar-i Bangadh*, "Account of a Voyage to Bangadh" in 1745, accompanying the party of the emperor Muhammad Shah to chastise a minor Afghan chieftain in northern India.[30] Muzaffar Alam and I have analyzed extensively the literary and political context of this text elsewhere, and I will refer the interested reader to our longer essay.[31] The account begins simply enough:

> On 23 Muharram 1058, an imperial order was issued to Saᶜad al-Din Khan, *khân-i sâmân*, and Hadi Yar Khan, *mushrîf* of the *farashkhâna*, to take the royal tents and, going across the river Jamuna, pitch them at a garden near the town of Loni. The next day, the 24th, the emperor intended to travel in his gilded palanquin and to leave the palace of *dâr al-khilâfat* Shahjahanabad with the intention of a hunt in Gadh Muktesar, and in that context also to chastise ᶜAli Muhammad Khan Rohila, who had become arrogant and was claiming a sort of autonomy.

It goes on to describe the trip in great detail, providing a real sense of the understated tone of irony and self-mockery in which Anand Ram Mukhlis presents his view of "public life," and his own situation therein. Mukhlis represents a particular variant of a familiar sort of halfway consciousness, torn between his "bourgeois" character as a Khatri from the fleshpots of eighteenth-century Delhi, and the aristocratic life of the court that he both enjoys and despises. The emperor has feet of clay, the notables are constantly bickering, but it is the same Mughal court and its culture that has helped Mukhlis gain a Persianized education and become a friend and patron of poets.

IV.

It remains for me, in this final section, to present some comparative reflections to help bring matters further into focus. My reflections will be primarily of a historiographical nature and will be limited largely to the neighboring region of Southeast Asia. The task is helped, but also hindered in a peculiar way, by the recent publication of two very ambitious works on Southeast Asia, written by Denys Lombard and Anthony Reid.

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While the two works diverge in a number of respects, and indeed represent two quite different fashions of making use of the Braudelian legacy, they do agree on some points. Thus Reid writes, concluding the first of his volumes:

> The age of commerce [1450–1680] was a period of enormous change for the lands below the winds. In cultural and educational forms, as in popular belief, legal systems, even clothing and building styles, the commercial cities were refashioning the communities of which they were the centers. In this respect the period bears comparison with its European analogue, the Renaissance, though this study has sought to make clear that neither the starting point nor the direction of change should be expected to parallel those in other parts of the world.[32]

We have certainly come some way from B. J. Schrieke's famous assertion that Java in A.D. 1700 was really much the same as Java in A.D. 700. Of course, it is not clear whether Lombard (or, indeed, any of a large number of other Southeast Asianists) would accept the view that after 1680 these changes came to be petrified, as "the high tide of imperialism and capitalism overwhelmed them."[33] But one major aspect of the questions treated by Reid would find wide acceptance: that the period under consideration saw a change from the agrarian ("hydraulic") city to the commercial cities of the coast. Lombard thus develops at considerable length this notion, in the Javanese case, of the cities of the north coast (*pasisir*) being at the cutting edge of transformations, not merely in terms of institutions, but in the *histoire des mentalités,* in the manner in which space was represented and in the new notions of individual time relative to what we may loosely call "textual time."

It is clear even from a cursory examination that the principles of social structure were less well-defined, at least in textual terms, in Southeast Asia than in either China or India during the same period. A problem arises, however, when we attempt to translate this abstract notion into the question of the relative rigidity or fluidity of the social structure itself, and the spaces that opened up for both political and social negotiation over time. One has a tendency to view Southeast Asian "indigenous" discourse as a "derivative discourse" whose roots lie in India,

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Persia, or China. Yet the openness of many Southeast Asian societies—whether Java, Thailand, or Arakan—to these multiple influences is itself a measure of their originality, a notion that Lombard wishes to capture through the idea of *carrefour*.

My own uneasiness with respect to Southeast Asian historiography stems in part from the poverty of an indigenous tradition today that seeks to challenge received paradigms. Compared to China, India, and especially Japan, we are in a peculiar historiographical situation: the historiography of Southeast Asia is almost entirely in the hands of Dutch, American, French, and Australian scholarship. Does this really matter? I would argue that it does, and one of its consequences is that the history of institutions in these countries remains curiously neglected. Even such sophisticated external scholarship as that of Benedict Anderson continues, for example, to insist on the unimportance of institutions and the arbitrary, or at least charismatic, power of individuals in determining the course of historical change. There has been a near-systematic refusal to analyze social types, or social groups: if one reads the chapter on "Social Organization" in Reid's magnum opus, one is left with the impression that only two distinctions are worth making: between males and females, and between slaves and others. Modern political preoccupations add a third distinction: between the "foreign" minorities (especially the Chinese) and indigenes.

A start had been made in the direction of another sort of social history in the course of the 1960s, but unfortunately it has since been neglected. In the context of the Javanese kingdom of Mataram, a model had been elaborated in which the traditional "official" or *priyayi* was seen as the repository of a particular sort of "public culture," relating to the art of politics, even if the preferred idiom of many members of this group was rooted in the language of honor (*hormat*). These officials are seen as acting in relation to the ruler and the chief minister (*patih*), but also to territorially based chiefs (*bupati*). Yet it was not clear how these structures translated into a larger social context, and how sharp was the tripartite division proposed by Clifford Geertz as being somehow immutable in the Javanese case. The historian Onghokham had proposed a certain fluidity in the Mataram case, arguing that figures from a commercial

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context (whom he identified by the term *jago*) worked their way into the *priyayi* and brought with them a taste for their own notions of public amusements, notably the celebrated cockfight. Some later historians have suggested that even the ranks of the *bupati* drew on Chinese migrants, revenue farmers, and the like. Most recently, Peter Carey has attempted to revive some of these considerations, arguing for a hybrid "public" arena in Mataram that draws on a diversity of regional traditions (notably those of eastern Java) including gamelan, forms of dance-drama, as well as the usual animal contests.[34]

These are still early soundings for we do not yet have the means to imagine a sociocultural history of even the best-studied parts of island Southeast Asia. Paradoxically, our problem here is not so much the absence of individual agency (which is constantly present in South Asia) as the existence of a model of the charismatic individual that has run wild, which probably reflects implicit prejudices concerning the "primitive" or "archaic" nature of such societies.

Some three decades ago (1966), S. N. Eisenstadt wrote that "historically, modernization is the process of change towards those types of social, economic and political systems that have developed in Western Europe and North America from the seventeenth century to the nineteenth."[35] This issue of *Dædalus* is evidence that such a view now appears untenable to even its author.[36] And yet where are we to go from here? Clearly, the historians of Japan are at a considerable advantage in the sense that the Japanese historical tradition itself has long insisted on the singularity of Japanese "modernization," deeply rooted in specific institutions but still "comparable" in some sense to the received Western model. The bottom line, which makes this vision credible, is the Japanese "bank balance." Many other parts of the world are not quite in the same position. But as Southeast Asia (and even South Asia) "arrives" in economic terms, one presumes a reconsideration of their historical trajectories too will eventually be seen as necessary. This is an unfortunate reason for historical revisionism, but there may be some point in facing up to it.

For several years now, I have tried to argue that modernity is historically a global and *conjunctural* phenomenon, not a

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virus that spreads from one place to another.[37] It is located in a series of historical processes that brought hitherto relatively isolated societies into contact, and we must seek its roots in a set of diverse phenomena—the Mongol dream of world conquest, European voyages of exploration, activities of Indian textile traders in the diaspora, the "globalization of microbes" that historians of the 1960s were fond of discussing, and so on. However, these were uneven processes, and also processes that had strong local roots and colors. Our major errors have been two: identifying "modernization" with the growth of a certain type of uniformity, and associating modernity with prosperity. Any amateur anthropologist who has been to Paris or Manhattan, symbols of "modernity" for so long, would realize the profound error of both assumptions on just a little reflection. Having taken away so much from the societies of South Asia, it seems to be high time that social science at least gave them back what they had by the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries—their admittedly very ambiguous "early modernity."

In contrast to earlier, largely technologically driven, models of modernity (of the Kuznetsian variety, for example), which insisted on the predominance of its objective and even measurable correlates, much recent writing is intent on posing the problem in terms of the peculiar quality of the subject in a modern context. This is a step in the right direction, but it is also important to note that the shift in perspective entails a concomitant shift in method. In sum, we must listen far more carefully to voices from the past, and this in turn requires a far greater attention to hermeneutics than sociologists have traditionally been willing to concede. What is at stake here is thus the very perception of the idea of change—the problem of human agency in determining both the possible identity of the subject and his or her trajectory in time.[38]

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am grateful to Mary Elizabeth Berry, Shmuel Eisenstadt, Sheldon Pollock, Gilles Tarabout, and Björn Wittrock for comments, encouragement, and suggestions. This work is in good measure the product of conversations with my collaborators Muzaffar Alam, Velcheru Narayana Rao, and David Shulman, to all of whom I am very grateful without necessarily implicating them in the conclu-

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sions. This essay is an abridged version of a longer text, wherein the arguments presented here are more fully substantiated empirically.

ENDNOTES

[1]Francis Zimmermann, *Généalogie de médecines douces: De l'Inde à l'Occident* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1995), 167.

[2]Irfan Habib, "Potentialities of Capitalistic Development in the Economy of Mughal India," *The Journal of Economic History* XXIX (1) (1969): 32–78. For the context, also see Frederic C. Lane, "Meanings of Capitalism," ibid., 13–31.

[3]Irfan Habib, *Essays in Indian History: Towards a Marxist Perception* (New Delhi: Tulika, 1995).

[4]Halil Inalcik, "Capital Formation in the Ottoman Empire," *The Journal of Economic History* XXIX (1) (1969): 97–140; Yasukazu Takenaka, "Endogenous Formation and Development of Capitalism in Japan," ibid., 141–162.

[5]Perry Anderson, *Lineages of the Absolutist State* (London: New Left Books, 1974).

[6]Louis Dumont, *Homo Hierarchicus: The Caste System and Its Implications*, trans. Mark Sainsbury (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970). For a recent and important statement on religion in India that considerably revises the Dumontian perspective, see Friedhelm Hardy, *The Religious Culture of India: Power, Love and Wisdom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

[7]Indeed, the debate still finds dismaying echoes in such recent works as Eugenia Vanina, *Ideas and Society in India from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Centuries* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1996).

[8]Cf. for example M. N. Pearson, "Political Participation in Mughal India," *The Indian Economic and Social History Review* IX (2) (1972): 113–131, and Stephen P. Blake, "The Patrimonial-Bureaucratic Empire of the Mughals," *Journal of Asian Studies* XXIX (1) (1979): 77–94. For an overview of these questions, see Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "The Mughal State—Structure or Process?: Reflections on Recent Western Historiography," *Indian Economic and Social History Review* XXIX (3) (1992): 291–321.

[9]For a sample of his more important writings, see Hermann Kulke, *Kings and Cults: State Formation and Legitimation in India and Southeast Asia* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1993); Kulke's considerable unease with regard to Weber and his "obvious misinterpretation or oversimplification of certain aspects of Hinduism" (ibid., 240) is visible in his essay, "Orthodoxe Restauration und hinduistische Sektenreligiosität im Werk Max Webers," in *Max Webers Studie über Hinduismus und Buddhismus: Interpretation und Kritik,* ed. Wolfgang Schluchter (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1984), 293–332.

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[10]For a recent survey and critique of the past half-century of historiography on the Mughals, see *The Mughal State, 1526–1750*, ed. Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998).

[11]For recent methodological reflections on the challenge posed by the upsurge of "micro-history" in the past two decades, see *Jeux d'échelles: La micro-analyse à l'experience*, ed. Jacques Revel (Paris: Gallimard-Le Seuil, 1996).

[12]David Ludden, *Peasant History in South India* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1985). The same author returns to his earlier site of inquiry with some new reflections in David Ludden, "Caste Society and Units of Production in Early-Modern South India," in *Institutions and Economic Change in South Asia*, ed. Burton Stein and Sanjay Subrahmanyam (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1996), 105–133.

[13]Cf. Burton Stein, *Peasant State and Society in Medieval South India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1980); for a summing up of the debate, see Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "State Formation and Transformation in Early Modern India and Southeast Asia," *Itinerario* XII (1) (1988): 91–109.

[14]For the most recent contribution to this debate, see Kesavan Veluthat, *The Political Structure of Early Medieval South India* (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1993).

[15]E. James Heitzman, "State Formation in South India, 850–1280," *Indian Economic and Social History Review* XXIV (1) (1987): 35–61; Y. Subbarayalu, "The Cola State," *Studies in History* (N.S.) IV (2) (1982): 265–306. Also see, most recently, James Heitzman, *Gifts of Power: Lordship in an Early Indian State* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997).

[16]David Dean Shulman, *The King and the Clown in South Indian Myth and Poetry* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1985).

[17]On Suntaramurtti, also see David Shulman, *Songs of the Harsh Devotee: The Têvâram of Cuntaramûrttinâyaṉâr* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990).

[18]J. Duncan M. Derrett, "Two Inscriptions Concerning the Status of Kammalas and the Application of Dharmasastra," in *Professor K. A. Nilakantha Sastri 80th Birthday Felicitation Volume* (Madras: University of Madras, 1971).

[19]Cynthia Talbot, "A Revised View of 'Traditional' India: Caste, Status and Social Mobility in Medieval Andhra," *South Asia* (N.S.) XV (1) (1992): 17–52.

[20]Velcheru Narayana Rao, David Shulman, and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Symbols of Substance: Court and State in Nayaka-period Tamil Nadu* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1992).

[21]For examples, see A. K. Ramanujan, Velcheru Narayana Rao, and David Shulman, *When God is a Customer: Telugu Courtesan Songs by Ksetrayya and Others* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1994). For an analysis of a particular case of a *noṇṭinâtakam,* see David Shulman and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "Prince of Poets and Ports: Cîtakkâtî, the Maraikkâyars and Ramnad, ca. 1690–1710," in *Islam and Indian Regions*, vol. I, ed. A. L. Dallapiccola and S. Zingel-Avé Lallemant (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1992), 497–535.

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[22]Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "The Politics of Fiscal Decline: A Reconsideration of Maratha Tanjavur, 1676–1799," *Indian Economic and Social History Review* XXXII (2) (1995): 177–217.

[23]V. Narayana Rao and David Shulman, "Sati-dana-shuramu of King Shahaji," manuscript translation, 1995 (to appear in an anthology of Telugu literature by the same authors); for the text, see Ganti Jogisomayajulu, ed., *Yakshagânamulu (Tañjâvûru)*, vol. III (Kakinada: Andhra University Series, 1955–57), 198–268.

[24]The parallel with Buddhist rhetoric was brought to my attention by Sheldon Pollock, to whom I am duly grateful.

[25]C. A. Bayly, *Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780–1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

[26]The comment is largely directed at Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, trans. T. Burger (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1992).

[27]C. A. Bayly, "Indian Ecumene and British Public, 1780–1880," paper presented to the South Asia Department, University of Chicago, 1992. I am grateful to the author for a copy of this text, of which a somewhat different version appears in Bayly, *Empire and Information*, 180–211.

[28]Muzaffar Alam, "*Dîndârî* and *Jahândârî* in Medieval Indo-Islamic Treatises on Statecraft," paper presented at the conference on "The Formation of Indo-Muslim Identity in Pre-Colonial South Asia," Duke University, April 1995. For an example of an *akẖlâq* text from the Mughal domains, see Sajida Sultana Alvi, *Advice on the Art of Governance: Mauᶜizah-i Jahângîri of Muhammad Bâqir Najm-i Ŝânî, An Indo-Islamic Mirror for Princes* (Albany, N.Y.: SUNY Press, 1989).

[29]For the Braj Bhasha text and an English translation, as well a particularly useful introduction, see Mukund Lath, *Ardhakathânaka, Half a Tale: A Study in the Interrelationship between Autobiography and History* (Jaipur: Rajasthan Prakrit Bharti Sansthan, 1981); for a recent discussion, see Eugenia Vanina, "The Ardhakathanaka by Banarasi Das: A Socio-cultural Study," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Third Series, V (2) (1995): 211–224.

[30]*Safar Nâma-i Mukẖlis*, ed. with notes by Sayyid Azhar ᶜAli (Rampur: Hindustan Press, 1946).

[31]Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "Discovering the Familiar: Notes on the Travel-Account of Anand Ram Mukhlis," *South Asia Research* XVI (2) (1996). Our work was partly inspired by an essay by one of our Ottomanist colleagues, Cemal Kafadar, "Self and Others: The Diary of a Dervish in Seventeenth Century Istanbul and First-person Narratives in Ottoman Literature," *Studia Islamica* Fasc. LXIX (1989): 121–150.

[32]Anthony Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce, 1450–1680*, 2 vols. (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1988–1993), vol. 1, 235.

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[33]Reid's conclusions are partly challenged by some of the other authors in a collective work. See Anthony Reid, ed., *Southeast Asia in the Early Modern Era: Trade, Power and Belief* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1993).

[34]Cf. Peter Carey, "Civilization on Loan: The Making of an Upstart Polity. Mataram and Its Successors, 1600–1830," *Modern Asian Studies* XXXI (3) (1997): 711–734.

[35]Shmuel N. Eisenstadt, *Modernization, Protest, and Change* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1966), 1.

[36]For a wide-ranging reconsideration of the place of Weberian theorization in contemporary social science thinking on India, see Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "Institutions, Agency and Economic Change in South Asia: A Survey and Some Suggestions," in Stein and Subrahmanyam, eds., *Institutions and Economic Change in South Asia*, 14–47.

[37]Cf. Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "Connected Histories: Notes towards a Reconfiguration of Early Modern Eurasia," *Modern Asian Studies* XXXI (3) (1997): 735–762.

[38]The interesting discussion of the question in Sudipto Kaviraj, *The Unhappy Consciousness: Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay and the Formation of Nationalist Discourse in India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1995), is, however, in my view flawed on account of its insistence that "modernity" is an import to be associated with British colonialism.

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David L. Howell

Territoriality and Collective Identity in Tokugawa Japan

JAPAN DURING THE TOKUGAWA PERIOD (1603–1868) was, by Western standards, a nation without absolutely fixed borders or clearly defined sovereignty. The emperor in Kyoto was but a symbolic suzerain; actual power within the main islands was divided between the Tokugawa shogunate (*bakufu*) and about 270 autonomous daimyo domains (*han*), while the peripheries—Hokkaido and its environs to the north, the Ryukyu Islands to the south—were subordinated to the Japanese polity yet not considered to be integral parts of it.

However ambiguous early modern Japan's boundaries may appear in hindsight, at the time they formed a coherent system in which social status ordered groups within the core polity while notions of civilization and barbarism defined identities in the core and periphery. This system, with its origins in the national unification of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, was early modern Japan's version of feudalism.

This essay will accordingly focus on the boundaries of the early modern Japanese state—not only the political boundaries, although they will figure importantly in the discussion, but the boundaries of collective identity and social status as well. These superficially disparate markers of separation were in essence diverse expressions of the same phenomenon: territoriality and collective identity reinforced one another, while the language of status provided the idiom in which difference was expressed and understood. Sketching the outlines of the Tokugawa polity in this manner will illustrate how different the "Japan" of the

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Tokugawa period was from its modern counterpart, while also suggesting how so differently conceived an entity could translate itself with such apparent ease into a modern nation-state.

STATUS IN EARLY MODERN JAPAN

Although rarely mentioned in Western scholarship on early modern Japan, the status system (*mibunsei*) was the central institution of Tokugawa feudalism and hence the key to understanding the regime's social and political order.[1] Status (*mibun*) referred both to membership in a group (usually based on the occupation of the head of the household) and to the formal duties (*yaku*) that accompanied such membership.[2] Duties included the payment of taxes, the performance of various types of labor, and military service to a lord. Thus a peasant household was part of a village community, with which it shared an obligation to pay taxes and perform corvée labor; similarly, a samurai warrior served in battle and bureaucracy alongside other members of his lord's retainer band. Self-governing status groups (or their constituent units) mediated relations between their members and higher authorities. The semi-autonomous peasant village is the classic example of this, but samurai retainer bands and indeed the domains themselves similarly served to ensure the daimyo's ability to fulfill his military duties to the shogun (pragmatically reconceived to include, even center on, administrative functions).

As a rule, group membership and the performance of duties went together, but exceptions were common. Sometimes group members could not fulfill their assigned duties, while other people performed various duties without strictly belonging to an appropriate group. A landless peasant, for example, could not participate directly in the business of paying land taxes and therefore did not merit full membership in the village community, while a masterless samurai who freelanced as a political consultant might serve a lord without being included in his retainer band. Such people occupied a vulnerable position in society, yet they retained a status identity nonetheless: a landless peasant was still a peasant, a masterless samurai still a samurai.

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Status as an expression of group membership and duty encompassed all members of society, albeit often incompletely or indirectly. Indeed, the status system even incorporated people who neither belonged to an occupational group nor performed clear duties and were therefore without regular status. Efforts were made to gather such people together and assign them duties to perform on the margins of society, ascribing to them the attributes of a status group. In effect, being without status became itself a type of status.

A brief example will illustrate this paradoxical point. The *hinin,* or "nonpersons," were one of the two major outcaste groups in Tokugawa Japan (the other being the *eta*).[3] A heterogeneous collection of beggars, entertainers, fortune-tellers, and other marginal people, the *hinin* existed beyond the boundaries of commoner society, yet they composed a status group with an internal organization and explicit duties. Among the duties of urban *hinin* was the regulation of homeless transients, called *nohinin* ("wild" *hinin*). The homeless were peasants or townspeople who had fallen on hard times; by dropping out of society they had effectively forfeited their commoner status, at least temporarily. *Hinin* were charged with removing the homeless from urban areas by sending them back to their native communities, or at least by running them out of town; failing that, the *hinin* might incorporate the homeless within their own ranks as "official" *hinin* (*kakae hinin,* literally, "kept" *hinin*), in which case they would continue to live by begging, but now within a community of beggars obligated to perform a variety of mostly unsavory tasks for the political authorities.[4]

This example raises the issue of the nature of discrimination in Tokugawa society. Specifically, it prompts the question of whether demotion to *hinin* status was necessarily a bad thing for homeless transients and other freelance beggars. On the surface it would appear to be so. After all, an "official" *hinin* was placed permanently outside the rest of society, while a homeless peasant or townsman might be experiencing nothing worse than a brief run of bad luck, after which he could return untainted to the ranks of commoners.

Nevertheless, it was better to be officially despised than casually reviled. The tag (*fuda*) that marked one's membership

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in the ranks of the *hinin* was certainly a symbol of social stigma, but it also symbolized the right to beg and to deal with other people of all statuses according to the rules of the status system. To be sure, the privileges of *hinin* status came at a price: aside from discrimination as outcastes, the *hinin* had to perform duties on behalf of the authorities. Yet the freedom from feudal duty enjoyed by the homeless came at an even greater price: as unplaced persons they were left completely vulnerable to the predations of arbitrary authority, for Tokugawa Japan was, in John W. Hall's phrase, a "container society." The "containers"—status groups—"can be thought of as protected arenas within which all persons of a given status [could] expect equal treatment under the law."[5]

As Yamamoto Naotomo has argued, discrimination (*sabetsu*) was the principle behind all social organization in early modern Japan; equality in social relations was seen as neither natural nor proper.[6] The status system served as the structure upon which social inequality—as well as orderly social relations—was produced and reproduced at the level of everyday interaction. Insofar as each status group performed a distinct function, all were equally important to the maintenance of social order. Status relations were guided as much by horizontal differences in social function as vertical distinctions in rank. Consequently, the outcastes existed outside of commoner society, but not *necessarily* below it—which explains why, for example, the headman of the outcastes in the Kantō region, Danzaemon, was able to carry two swords and otherwise comport himself in a manner analogous to a minor domain lord. In short, the discrimination directed against outcastes in the Tokugawa period was necessarily qualitatively different from the racial and ethnic discrimination practiced in contemporary societies, including Japan.[7] In an era in which all social relations were characterized by inequality, the benefits of membership in an official outcaste group may well have outweighed the burden of the extra measure of contempt that accompanied it.

The existence of self-governing occupational groups did not require that status in and of itself be the organizing principle behind social relations. After all, all sorts of occupational groups existed in medieval Japan, yet status was not systematized as an

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all-encompassing set of institutions. Social groups in late medieval Japan—whether defined by occupation, residence, or some combination of the two—did not function to integrate the various parts into an institutional whole, but on the contrary served to shield their members, both individually and collectively, from the authority of the state and the predations of competing groups. In contrast, the early modern state effectively marshaled its limited power—limited because it had neither the manpower nor indeed the need to venture often into the realm of individual (or household) affairs—to organize occupational groups as its self-governing agents. In short, while occupational and residential groups in late medieval Japan were truly autonomous of a weak and ineffective state, status groups in the early modern period surrendered true autonomy in favor of state legitimation while retaining a measure of control over their internal affairs. Social groups evolved to escape state power in medieval Japan; they were created or validated by the state in the early modern era.

Status as a legal institution originated in the national unification of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. It was not a conscious creation but rather the product of an interconnected series of measures implemented under the hegemonic authority of Oda Nobunaga and Toyotomi Hideyoshi and built upon by the early Tokugawa shoguns. Policies like the separation of the samurai from the peasantry (*heinō bunri*), sword hunts (*katanagari*), land surveys, the founding of large castle towns with their merchant and artisan populations, and the compilation of registers of religious affiliation (*shūmon aratamechō*) all contributed to the formal delineation of the samurai and commoner populations as status groups. Furthermore, over the course of the seventeenth century the shogunate and domains institutionalized various other extant social groups, including the court nobility, the Buddhist clergy, and the outcastes as legal statuses.

To be sure, assigning legal statuses to groups of people was not the principal motive behind these policies, but they came together nonetheless as a system. The removal of most samurai from the countryside and the concomitant disarming of the peasantry, combined with the imposition of a federalist national order by Hideyoshi and the Tokugawa shoguns, were intended

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to thwart challenges to the hegemonic order, but in doing so they effectively detached the warrior class from the mass of peasants and townspeople. Land surveys and the registration of the rural population were designed to secure the samurai's access to surplus agricultural production and to control Christianity, but in the process they marked the commoners as a distinct status group. Similarly, the Tokugawa shogunate's regulation of religious institutions was aimed most immediately at preventing a revival of Buddhist political power, but a result was the demarcation of the clergy as a distinct status category. The same was true of the shogunate's control of the imperial court and the attendant separation of the nobility from the rest of the population. Finally, the creation of a centrally sanctioned (albeit plural) authority structure for the outcastes was designed to maintain social order, but in the process it imbued them with the characteristics of a single status group despite their internal occupational heterogeneity.

The imperative to create an institutionally diverse yet centrally integrated political structure fueled a taxonomic revolution in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, so that the clarification of one group's function necessarily led to the clarification of other groups' functions as well, leading by the middle of the seventeenth century to a structure in which every individual (through the medium of the household or its functional equivalent, such as the Buddhist sect) was placed into a social category with clear obligations. This process was validated in Tokugawa law, which gave status groups a measure of autonomy in adjudicating internal disputes—and treated members of different statuses differently in cases that crossed status boundaries.

Nowhere is the taxonomic urge more evident than in the case of the blind and other physically handicapped people. According to Katō Yasuaki, most blind people in early modern Japan remained at home and therefore fit into the status system in the same manner as other members of their households; they retained their natal status identity even when living alone so long as the village or other community took responsibility for their well-being. Those who left home to beg fell under the authority of *hinin,* while others who engaged in divination became affili-

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ated with local Buddhist temples or, after 1783, the Tendai sect. But when the blind left home to work as storytellers, acupuncturists, or masseurs they became subject to self-governing associations, complete with an intricate hierarchy of ranks, regardless of their original status. The principal association of the blind was known as the *tōdō*, a guild based in Kyoto with branches in Edo (Tokyo) and numerous other cities. True to the principle of internal autonomy for status groups, the *tōdō* maintained its own justice system, including even the right to pass death sentences upon members.[8]

Social taxonomy was driven principally by occupation rather than some immutable characteristic such as heredity. Accordingly, it was often possible for people to change status (at least temporarily) by taking up a new livelihood: thus male servants in warrior households carried swords and otherwise behaved as petty samurai while in service, while a blind person's status as a commoner, outcaste, or member of the *tōdō* depended entirely upon his involvement in farming, begging, or storytelling. There were some exceptions to this general rule—it was nearly impossible for *eta* to escape outcaste status, and commoners could sometimes buy nominal samurai status without changing occupation—but insofar as status was linked to the performance of feudal obligations, it follows that the means of such performance, occupation, was the key criterion of status identity and that the exceptions involved statuses that carried special burdens or privileges.

THE GEOGRAPHY OF STATUS

The Tokugawa shogunate could delineate status categories within Japanese society in the seventeenth century because it was the first regime in Japanese history to define the political boundaries of the state clearly, if not unambiguously. Inner boundaries separated the core polity from the dependent yet autonomous peripheries of Japan, while less well-defined outer boundaries set the peripheries apart from the non-Japanese world. Together, these boundaries situated Japan within the East Asian geopolitical order. The inner boundaries were physical borders; the outer ones amorphous zones defined by trade,

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diplomacy, and ritual, subject to Japanese territorial claims that came only in response to the Western challenge of the nineteenth century. Discussions of the early modern Japanese state refer to the area enclosed within the inner boundaries, for it was only here that the authority of the shogun and his proxies applied unambiguously to all.

To be sure, the idea of a central state was nothing new in Japan: the imperial house had claimed authority over all of Japan since at least the mid-seventh century, and throughout the ensuing millennium the idea of a unitary state in the Japanese archipelago retained currency among political leaders and thinkers. But although the imperial house and its warrior proxies had long asserted their authority over the Japanese islands, they had never set clear boundaries for the country; in any case, no regime before the Tokugawa was ever sufficiently powerful to enforce such boundaries. In short, while earlier regimes had claimed authority over all of "Japan," none had ever defined exactly what "Japan" was.[9] In contrast, early modern Japan's borders were well-defined: barriers in southern Hokkaido separated the Tokugawa state from the nominally autonomous realm of the Ainu (known as the Ezochi) to the north, while in the south the border with the Ryukyu kingdom—similarly nominally autonomous from Japan—was fixed between the Amami and Okinawa Islands.

Early modern Japan's borders were not the unambiguous lines on a map that separate modern nation-states from one another.[10] Even within the inner boundaries of the core polity lay zones that, like the Ezochi and Ryukyu, were autonomous yet subject to the authority of the shogunate; these internal autonomies included the daimyo domains (whose physical borders were relatively clearly defined), territories under the authority of Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines, and the more anomalous realm of the outcastes. The internal autonomies of the early modern polity were situationally defined according to the rules of the status system, so that different social groups understood the political geography of Japan differently.[11] However, the complex internal geography of the core polity had a coherence that derived from the fixity of the polity's borders: daimyo domains, outcaste territories, and other spatial units were part of the political

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order of the Tokugawa state and had no meaning outside that context. The core polity's inner boundaries linked the overlapping internal geographies of shogunate, domains, temple grounds, and outcaste territories into a coherent institutional whole.

The formalization of legal status, even of groups that had long existed organically, was critical to the delineation of internal social and political boundaries within the early modern polity. An examination of the position of the *eta* in agricultural districts reveals the complex nature of such boundaries. Although the *eta*, as outcastes, are stereotypically associated with professions entailing contact with defilement and death, in fact many if not most Tokugawa-period *eta* lived mainly by farming and engaged in outcaste activities primarily as by-employments or to fulfill their obligations to the authorities.[12] *Eta* farming communities were subject to the same obligations as commoner peasant villages, particularly the payment of land taxes (*nengu*), but they were not considered to be independent, self-governing entities. Rather, they were subordinated as branches (*edamura*) of neighboring commoner villages, and as such were subject to the authority of the parent village leadership—without, however, being accorded the privileges of membership in the peasant community.[13] In addition to their land-tax obligations as farmers, rural *eta* were also responsible for the performance of duties as outcastes. Some of these duties (such as the disposal of animal carcasses, from which valuable leather and other products could be obtained) were lucrative, but others (such as guarding prisoners and executing criminals) were not. In either case, because these outcaste duties were unconnected to the *eta*'s identity as farmers, the commoner parent villages had no control over them. Instead, they were overseen by regional *eta* leaders, such as the elders of Amabe and Rokujō villages for residents in the vicinity of Kyoto, or the Edo *eta* headman, Danzaemon, for residents of the Kantō plain.[14]

This example is particularly interesting because it reveals the overlapping geographies of status in the early modern period. Rural *eta* communities were part of the familiar scenery of peasant villages, daimyo domains, and shogunal territory that composed the political landscape of Tokugawa Japan; but at the same time they were also situated on a very different map—

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largely invisible except to outcastes—that allocated rights to animal carcasses and distributed obligations to perform prison duty without regard to boundaries of village or domain. Other marginal status groups subscribed to their own geographies, such as the calendar-makers, fortune-tellers, and *manzai* performers tied to the noble (*kuge*) Tsuchimikado house, or the house-boat people (*ebune*) of the Inland Sea region, whose movements and social relations were unconstrained by political borders.[15]

The institutionalization of outcaste status by the early modern regime made the base realm of the outcastes autonomous yet clearly and in multiple ways subordinated to the quotidian world of samurai and commoners. The autonomy of the outcastes represented the drawing of a significant political boundary, for it rendered their largely invisible map of carrion and condemned prisoners exogenous to the visible map of shogunate, domains, and peasant villages, and explains the regime's readiness to defer to the outcaste authorities' judgment on matters pertaining to the status of outcastes.[16]

Institutionalized status categories were as obvious and apparently immutable to observers as a samurai's two swords, yet their boundaries were quite porous. Perhaps the closest analogy in contemporary society is gender. Just as most people bear their gender identities without reflection, so too did status constitute a "natural" part of the social selves of people in early modern Japan. And just as gender conventions can be challenged or even inverted, so too was status constantly subject to redefinition. But like gender, status was all-encompassing: it could be ambivalent or situationally defined but not eschewed entirely, because it lay at the core of social identity.

Disruptions of the boundaries of status had to be rectified or at least regularized. The authorities usually sought to bring practice into line with status through such means as sumptuary decrees, which aimed at forcing commoners to behave according to standards appropriate to their station.[17] But discrepancies could also be resolved the other way, by adjusting status to fit social reality. For example, a commoner woman betrothed to a samurai could be adopted into a second samurai family to get around prohibitions of marriage across status lines.[18]

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Some violations of status boundaries challenged the premises of Tokugawa social hierarchy and therefore attracted official concern. For example, the shogunal authorities punished *eta* caught attempting to pass as commoners in Osaka (conversely, however, commoners living in *eta* villages were not disturbed, although there seems to have been an implicit assumption that they would enter officially into *eta* status if the move was permanent).[19] Similarly, in 1648 the Edo city magistrates prohibited townsmen from carrying swords in imitation of servants in samurai households, who assumed the trappings of samurai status while in service but were not considered true samurai.[20]

With official sanction, however, forays across status boundaries could serve as a necessary corrective to the contradictions built into the system. In all instances, movement across status boundaries was defined situationally and so was not necessarily permanent or even intended as genuine, as the following example from the Nanbu domain reveals. In 1836, Shōsuke, the peasant scribe at a rural intendant's office (*daikansho*), was sent by the authorities to the Mito domain to deal with the aftermath of a vendetta exacted by a local youth. While on his mission, he was permitted to use a surname and carry two swords, and thereby present himself as a samurai.[21] Shōsuke engaged in status transvestism, assuming a form appropriate to his task without the pretense of a more profound or lasting transformation. The artifice was necessary because his duties were of a sort suited to a village official, yet his role as an official representative of the Nanbu domain called for someone of samurai status.

The *gōmune,* a group of entertainers in Edo, epitomize the situational character of status identities. *Gōmune* were commoners who engaged in performance and begging; their standard repertoire centered on imitations of established arts—noh, religious storytelling, puppetry, and the like—which they performed on street corners, temple grounds, and other public places. The *gōmune*'s begging, albeit disguised as performance, infringed upon the outcaste map of Edo, in which territories for begging were carefully delineated. Accordingly, in 1651 their leader, Isoemon (later known as Jindayū), was placed under the authority of Kuruma Zenshichi, headman of the Edo *hinin*, who in turn answered to the *eta* leader, Danzaemon. Unlike other marginal

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groups under outcaste authority, however, the *gōmune* retained their commoner status, so that once an individual *gōmune* gave up his profession Zenshichi lost all claim to authority over him.[22]

TOKUGAWA FEUDALISM

The distinctiveness of Tokugawa Japan's internal political organization has fostered lively debate concerning the nature of the early modern Japanese state. The difficulty historians have had in arriving at a consensus is reflected in the abundance of terms they have invoked to describe it: Western scholars have recently suggested such concepts as "federalism," "absolutism," "flamboyant state," and "compound state."[23] This ongoing debate over terms reflects historians' dissatisfaction with the concept of "feudalism," which at one time was the focus of Western and Japanese scholarship on the early modern Japanese state.[24] Western scholars now generally eschew the term entirely or use it in a limited sense to refer to the ties of vassalage that bound the samurai, including the daimyo, to their lords and to the shogun.

At the risk of appearing hopelessly old-fashioned, I should like to make a case here for feudalism as an analytical category, understood in the Marxian sense as a mode of production. Rodney Hilton has defined the feudal mode of production as being characterized by an "exploitative relationship between landowners and subordinated peasants, in which the surplus beyond subsistence of the latter, whether in direct labor or in rent in kind or in money, is transferred under coercive sanction to the former."[25] This admittedly sweeping definition, applied mechanically to Japan, does misrepresent the political economy of the Tokugawa period insofar as the authorities quickly lost the ability—if indeed they ever really had it—to expropriate effectively the entire surplus value of peasant production. Nevertheless, if a mode of production is seen as a kind of genetic coding, in terms of which political, social, and economic institutions are articulated, this conception of feudalism does help us to understand the logic underlying the Tokugawa system. That is, the institutional structure was designed to support the military and administrative needs of the regime through the expropria-

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tion of agricultural surplus as expressed through the *kokudaka* system, which served as the means to calculate taxation and the domains' military obligations to the shogunate.[26] Whether the *kokudaka* system worked well or not—and, in fact, it worked less well over time—is not the issue; the salient point is that institutions could develop and change only to the extent that the regime's feudal imperative could be accommodated.

To be sure, feudalism is a loaded term: it connotes a repressive antithesis to modernity and, with its Western roots, raises the specter of Orientalism. The considerable hazards of invoking the concept notwithstanding, I persist because it does help us to see what is distinctive about early modern Japan. I should like to stress that we can do this only if we treat feudalism not as the ending point for a discussion of the Tokugawa polity, and not in a teleological fashion, but rather, as suggested above, as the genetic coding of Tokugawa institutions, through which responses to political and economic exigencies were articulated. Such a broad view of feudalism allows for a certain commonality of purpose among a broad range of premodern societies and distinguishes them from their modern counterparts, while still allowing for a great deal of variation in their specific responses to particular historical conditions. Used carefully—that is, so long as we reject a necessary progression from feudalism to capitalism—it allows us (ironically, perhaps) to avoid both teleology with its attendant reductionism and a static view of premodern societies.

In the Japanese case, both the medieval (mid-twelfth through the late sixteenth centuries) and early modern (late sixteenth through mid-nineteenth centuries) periods were feudal, yet all institutions changed a great deal during this time. Early modernity in Japan was a distinctive historical moment, in which many of the attributes of what we usually think of as a modern society—including considerable economic development, the growth of a relatively centralized state, the emergence of a professional bureaucracy, and an ideological apparatus to justify the state—were present, yet the political and institutional structure was nonetheless qualitatively different from the modern. The key to that difference is the fact that all developments, however modern in appearance, were predicated upon the fundamental need of

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the authorities to expropriate effectively the surplus value of production from the workers of the land, whether directly in the form of agricultural taxation or indirectly in the form of other sorts of levies upon the nonagricultural population.

The defining feature of early modernity in Japan was the status system, an institutional structure found only during the Tokugawa period. Status was tied to earlier notions of social difference, yet it allowed many of the apparently modern features of Tokugawa Japan to develop, in part because expropriation took the form of the obligation of status groups to fulfill their duties to the state. The status system, in other words, was the institutional manifestation of the regime's need to order social groups to fulfill their obligations efficiently. For the peasantry and samurai these obligations took the classic feudal forms of land taxes and military duty, while for urban residents and outcastes they centered on the provision of services necessary for the smooth running of the military and administrative establishment.

The status system was flexible enough to allow for all sorts of developments, including considerable economic growth, but only so long as they took shape within the confines of the status-based, feudal order. Eventually that order buckled under the pressure of the very changes it had fostered and, with a push from the now decidedly nonfeudal Western world, it disintegrated. Status as an institutional structure, and the boundaries of polity and identity predicated upon it, collapsed with the downfall of the feudal polity, yet it took decades for status to be translated into the idiom of the nation-state with its modern citizenry.

By ceding a measure of autonomy to status groups, including the domains, the shogunate abstained from intruding into those aspects of daily life that were deemed external to national concerns. This opened the door to a degree of dissonance between the interests of the state at the national level, as embodied in the shogunate, and its actual operation at the local level, as overseen by the domains and other status groups. This dissonance even manifested itself in the realm of foreign relations, as the interests of the shogunate and those of the domains charged with overseeing ties with Japan's peripheries did not always coincide. More

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generally, every domain's desire to maintain autonomy necessarily clashed with the shogunate's need to assert overall control. Yet throughout most of the Tokugawa period, the domains' recognition of Tokugawa legitimacy ensured that all differences of interest would be resolved within broad parameters laid down by the shogunate. Consequently, Japan could safely maintain a multiplicity of "states" within the state.

The Tokugawa order eventually toppled once the fragmentation of authority was rendered untenable by a combination of economic and diplomatic pressures. Economic development within Japan undermined the autonomy of status groups because social and economic relations could no longer be contained internally: ties across domain and status boundaries rendered the network of internal autonomies obsolete. Similarly, the expansion of the Western powers into East Asia compelled the shogunate to intervene more actively into relations with Japan's peripheries. These pressures led to a general crisis in Japanese feudalism. The shogunate responded by trying to remake itself as a more unitary state. It failed, and the Meiji Restoration was the result.

THE GEOGRAPHY OF CIVILIZATION

The institutionalization of status resonated with yet another sort of boundary, that separating the "civilized" (*ka*) and "barbarian" (*i*) realms of the Confucian world view. The Tokugawa regime created for itself a naturalized version of the sinocentric world order of a civilized core surrounded by barbarian or at best imperfectly civilized peripheries.[27] It largely supplanted—and partially subsumed within itself—an earlier bifurcation of the world into "human" and "demon" realms, replacing it with a tripartite division in which previously demonized aliens on Japan's peripheries were humanized as barbarians and the realm of demons was displaced farther afield.[28]

As noted above, the Tokugawa world order was predicated upon the existence of a core polity, consisting of the shogunate and domains, surrounded by buffers of ambivalent sovereignty that served to situate the Japanese state within East Asia and concomitantly lend legitimacy to the regime. Japan's ostensible national "isolation" notwithstanding, Tokugawa diplomacy func-

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tioned within the greater East Asian international system, which was dominated by China. Indeed, the only two countries with which Japan maintained official diplomatic relations, Korea and Ryukyu, were both leading tributaries of China. Japanese diplomacy was accordingly conducted with an acute awareness of China, despite the fact that Japan did not have direct ties with that country, tributary or otherwise.

However, the Tokugawa world order was not an exact replica of the Chinese model. Unlike China, early modern Japan was not a fully centralized state. The shogunate delegated responsibility for overseeing foreign relations to domains with historical ties to the various "windows" on the outside world: the Matsumae domain oversaw trade ties with the Ainu in the Ezochi, Tsushima mediated relations with Korea, and Satsuma regulated contacts with Ryukyu.[29] To be sure, the shogunate retained sanctioning power over its proxies' outside contacts and thus set the parameters for their diplomatic and commercial activities; moreover, it managed the "window" at Nagasaki itself, although the Dutch and Chinese traders who called there were not recognized as official envoys of their home countries. Nevertheless, the gap between the shogunate's interests and perceptions and those of the domains was wide enough to complicate the functioning of Tokugawa foreign relations.

One such complication involved the sovereignty of peripheral regions. A tributary relationship with China did not necessarily entail a loss of meaningful sovereignty for the subordinate power; indeed, as in the case of the early Ryukyu kingdom, investiture by the Chinese emperor often lent legitimacy to the rule of a local strongman and thereby hastened state formation.[30] In contrast, in Japan, the hierarchy of sovereignty from shogunate to intermediary domain to periphery worked to maintain the peripheries as exogenous dependencies of the Tokugawa state. Such was the case with Hokkaido and the rest of the Ezochi in the Tokugawa order.

Until the late seventeenth century there had never been a clear boundary separating the Ezochi from "Japan." A boundary was finally drawn in southern Hokkaido after the failure of Shakushain's War of 1669, the last significant attempt by the Hokkaido Ainu to assert their political and economic indepen-

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dence from Japan. It marked the northern limit of Japan and the southern extreme of the Ezochi, but left the Ezochi otherwise unbounded until the mid-nineteenth century, when an international border was set with Russia in the Kurils and Sakhalin. In practice, the Ezochi as the object of Japanese trade interest and political influence included Hokkaido beyond the Matsumae domain's home territory in the Oshima peninsula, the southern Kuril Islands, and southern Sakhalin—all areas inhabited by the Ainu but not by substantial numbers of other northeast Asian peoples.

The Matsumae domain's legitimacy hinged upon the Ezochi's status as an appendage to Japan, for its position within the Tokugawa state depended upon maintaining trade relations with the Ainu. It accordingly took pains to segregate the Ainu and Japanese populations, both physically and culturally, even as it fostered trade and commercial fishing in the Ezochi.[31] For most of the Tokugawa period this policy suited the needs of the shogunate as well. Kamiya Nobuyuki has argued that Toyotomi Hideyoshi, the hegemon who successfully reunified Japan in the late sixteenth century, saw the Ezochi as an important buffer against aggression from the north; at that time, the north was represented by the Jurchens, who eventually established the Qing empire in China. The Ezochi maintained this function under the Tokugawa shoguns who succeeded Hideyoshi.[32]

When Russia appeared as a threat in the nineteenth century, the shogunate responded by attempting to absorb the Ezochi within the "civilized" core of Japan through the assimilation of the Ainu population as "Japanese." This policy undermined the Matsumae domain's raison d'être, for its position as intermediary relied on the clear distinction between the Ainu and Japanese populations. The shogunate's policy had the further effect of setting a northern boundary for the Ezochi—now unequivocally a part of Japan—in the Kuril Islands and Sakhalin.[33]

The Tokugawa world order not only situated Japan within the greater East Asian region, it delineated civilized and barbarian realms within the Japanese archipelago itself. This gave rise to a paradox. According to the logic of this world view, if Japan was to be the civilized core of the world order, it followed that civilization was the essence of Japaneseness. Civi-

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lization thus became both a political and ethnic question: the boundary that separated the civilized from the barbarian was the boundary that separated the Japanese state from its subordinated peripheries and the Japanese people from their non-Japanese neighbors.

This paradox was only resolved over time and in response to political and diplomatic exigencies. "Civilization" as it was first conceived was, as Bob Wakabayashi has put it, "where Confucian ritual obtain[ed]"—the exclusive realm of a mere handful of men, well-versed in the Chinese classics.[34] According to Tsukamoto Manabu, intellectuals looked upon the countryside as a particularly benighted repository of barbarian elements.[35] But however gratifying this intellectual construct may have been to neo-Confucian thinkers as individuals, as a geopolitical strategy it made no sense to equate Japanese identity with an impossibly high standard of civilization. As a result, the nature of civilization itself changed once Japanese identity became a pressing geopolitical as well as ideological issue in the latter part of the Tokugawa period. Far from requiring ordinary folk to immerse themselves in the neo-Confucian canon, the new standards of civilization focused on a cluster of culturally significant elements of outward appearance and demeanor, such as clothing, hairstyle, names, and language. For example, Kikuchi Isao has described the efforts of Nanbu authorities in the early nineteenth century to eradicate barbarian customs in their domain, particularly the failure of local women to shave their eyebrows as Edo women did. At one point, officials took their civilizing mission door-to-door with razor and whetstone, but peasant women resisted their tonsorial overtures because naked brows offered no protection for the eyes against sweat during farm work.[36]

The ethnic and geopolitical dimensions of the identification of civilization with Japan were particularly evident on the dependent peripheries of the Tokugawa state, such as in dealings with the Ainu people of Hokkaido. As I have argued at length elsewhere, officials of both the Matsumae domain (which oversaw relations with the Ainu) and the shogunate itself focused on the same criteria of civilization qua Japaneseness in their respective policies of dissimilation and assimilation toward the Ainu. An important aspect of asserting Japanese sovereignty over

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Hokkaido and adjacent territories was the imposition upon the Ainu of Japanese hairstyles, names, and other ethnic markers of civilization and hence Japaneseness.[37]

The realm of civilization did not exist independently of the realm of status. When shogunal officials set forth to assimilate the Ainu, they could not make them into generic "Japanese," for a generic Japanese identity did not yet exist. Instead, they had to categorize the Ainu in terms of the status system. As barbarians, the Ainu had lacked status, which suggested to many Japanese observers a link to the outcastes—a link reinforced by many of the attributes that had marked the Ainu as barbarians in the first place, such as their unbound hair and dietary predilections.[38] As civilized Japanese, however, the Ainu were made into commoners; for example, the Ainu community on the island of Etorofu in the southern Kurils, which lay at the northern extreme of territory claimed by the Tokugawa state, was designated a "village" (*mura*) with an appropriate roster of officials with Japanese-style names.[39]

The urgency of the shogunate's attempts to assimilate the Ainu reflects the identification of ethnic identity with political sovereignty in early modern Japan—an identification not shared by the Russian state, which represented the principal threat to Japanese claims to the Ezochi, or other expansive regimes, including China. It seems never to have occurred to shogunal policymakers that Japan could be a multiethnic empire in which non-Japanese peoples would be subject to the sovereignty of the Japanese state in the same manner as the core population. This linking of identity and sovereignty survived into the modern era, so that the Meiji state sought to deny the political validity of non-Japanese identities. A vestige of this survives today in the ideology of "homogeneity" that informs Japanese understandings of their polity and culture.

STATUS AND THE ORIGINS OF THE MODERN NATION-STATE

To summarize my argument thus far, early modern Japan can be conceived in terms of a series of three overlapping geographies. The first was a geography of power, which defined the physical limits of the Japanese state. It was this geography that

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gave form and meaning to the other two, for the Tokugawa regime was the first in Japanese history to draw and maintain clear physical boundaries for itself. The second was a geography of civilization, which separated the civilized from the barbarian, both within the Japanese archipelago and within East Asia. Linked to the geography of power, notions of civilization assumed the properties of ethnicity. The third was a geography of death, which distinguished the quotidian world of samurai and commoners from the base world of outcastes. The subordinated autonomy of the outcastes' realm was analogous to that of the barbarian peripheries of the Tokugawa state.

Yet it was out of this tangled mass of overlapping geographies that the modern Japanese nation-state emerged. Earlier understandings of society and polity were translated into a new idiom, in which feudal duty (*yaku*) was reconceived as a subject's loyalty to the emperor, and ethnicity became indistinguishable from national identity. The intermediate autonomies—village community, status group, alien ethnicity—that had ordered relations between the early modern state and individual Japanese disappeared, replaced by a single geography that directly tied subjects to the state without the encumbrance of mediating groups and identities.

Thus, in response to threats to its sovereignty, the Japanese state expanded its borders to incorporate the Ezochi and (in the early Meiji period) the Ryukyu kingdom. The civilized overcame the barbarian within the confines of the expanded state—thanks in part to a reconception of civilization so thorough that a trip to the barber shop could now turn a previously barbarian Ainu into a civilized Japanese peasant. Identification with the state transformed a contextual notion of civilization into an essential concept of Japanese ethnicity; the geographies of power and civilization fused into one.

The boundaries of status likewise came under pressure and served through their transformation as a catalyst for the ideological justification of a unitary nation-state. Evidence of this pressure can be found at a number of levels, from the social and political tension fostered by the relative weakening of the samurai's economic position to concerns that the distinction between outcastes and commoners was breaking down.[40] For example,

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Buyō Inshi, the pseudonymous author of the *Seji kenmonroku,* an early-nineteenth-century polemic on the collapse of social order, focused his denunciation of the outcastes upon their supposed distaste for labor, love of wasteful luxury, and flagrant disregard for status-based rules of propriety.[41] Similarly, the widespread sale of samurai status in the late Tokugawa period, usually dismissed as a desperate fiscal maneuver, may be seen as an attempt to redress imbalances in the status system in a manner analogous to the way that civilization was made more easily attained or imposed. Perhaps most suggestively, the valorization of the quotidian by thinkers from Hirata Atsutane to Ninomiya Sontoku made agricultural work a devotional act, thus simultaneously denying the validity of the outcastes' base realm and suggesting a unity between power and status as the quotidian was identified with loyalty and duty to the emperor.[42]

If the status system was the defining feature of the early modern order, surely its collapse marked the onset of modernity. Central to this transformation was a reconfiguration of the relationship between economy and social order. During the Tokugawa period, economic relations were given social expression through the status system, then were subsumed within it. For example, a compelling economic imperative—hunger—drove the original *gōmune* into the streets to sing and dance for a few coppers; however, once imbued with an identity as *gōmune* and placed under the authority of outcastes at the margins of society, the strictly economic nature of their activities was thoroughly subordinated to their social identity as members of a particular status group. Their livelihoods as performers, in other words, could be comprehended only in the context of the status system. The *gōmune*'s example is particularly striking because of the close relationship between their economic activities and their status—once they gave up performing and begging, they returned to being commoners—but the same general principle obtained throughout early modern Japan: livelihood had no meaning as an economic activity divorced from status.

The ordering of social groups through the status system was a political act. The transition from the early modern to the modern therefore entailed a reorientation of the politics of the quotidian, by which I mean the political significance attached

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to the ways people led their everyday lives. For instance, many people in Tokugawa Japan supported themselves through handicraft production, but while their daily routines and living standards may have been generally similar, political understandings of their production varied considerably. Hence the quotidian existence of an outcaste maker of leather-soled sandals (*setta*) was perceived as qualitatively different from that of a commoner weaver, while both differed radically from that of a samurai who made umbrellas to make ends meet.

The status system did not, however, distinguish among different ways of organizing actual production: the weaver's formal status identity as a peasant (*hyakushō*) remained fixed whether she worked alone at home or in a factory with two dozen other women. Through the subordination of economic activity to social status, the Tokugawa order could absorb a certain degree of economic-structural change without a fundamental threat to feudal institutions. Absent the status system, economic relations in the Meiji period and after achieved fuller expression in the ordering of society: put starkly, class came to affect social relations more immediately and more obviously than in the past. Under the new, modern politics of the quotidian, the locus of political meaning in everyday life shifted from the corporate status group to production and the individual's (or household's) relationship to it.

Although the status system insulated Tokugawa institutions from the immediate effects of economic change, it is nonetheless true that commercialization—and, eventually, the beginnings of capitalist production—undermined the integrity of status boundaries. As an example of the increasing gap between the political-institutional and social-economic natures of status groupings, Tsukada Takashi has examined the transformation of the Watanabe village, the principal *eta* community in Osaka, over the course of the Tokugawa and early Meiji periods. He argues that prior to the late eighteenth century the elders of the village, who had authority over *eta* throughout the greater Osaka area, put the fulfillment of their (and their community's) feudal obligations as *eta* ahead of independent economic activities, but by the end of the Tokugawa era many of the same families (as well as new ones that had risen to prominence) favored business

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ventures over their official duties. By the 1880s, the community's leading citizens—now "liberated" as "new commoners" (*shinheimin*)—had invented for themselves an entrepreneurial past in which their former role as custodians of relations between the outcaste community and society at large played no part.[43]

The example of Watanabe is particularly striking, but not at all unusual. Throughout the countryside, commercialization undermined the character of peasant villages as more-or-less insular economic communities, often leading to tensions between a small group of relatively well-to-do families at the top of village society and a larger number of their less fortunate neighbors.[44] In a strict, institutional sense, the nature of peasant status did not change no matter the consequences of economic change; the levying of tax obligations and the registration of villagers remained essentially the same. Yet the reality of social and economic relations made peasanthood a complex status category.

The status system was flexible enough to absorb a degree of social change without disrupting the integrity of status groupings. As such, it was compatible with the institutional structure of the Tokugawa economy, which provided an ambient environment for growth and the beginnings of structural transformation.[45] But neither social nor economic institutions could contain change forever. By the end of the Tokugawa period, the status system had grown heavy on duty but light on privilege as the demands of a collapsing regime put a tremendous burden on society while the autonomy of status groups rapidly eroded in the face of economic change.

Hitherto, analyses of the origins of the modern Japanese state have been framed in terms of a dichotomy between "internal" (mostly economic) factors and "external" (diplomatic) ones. As we have seen, the status system was the thread that linked disparate economic, political, and diplomatic realms, which suggests that at a systemic level pressure in one area affected the course of change in another. Status was the defining institution of Japan's early modernity; its absence paved the way for modernity, which in Japan entailed a new sort of obligation—that of the imperial subject to the emperor. Ordinary people within Japan, as well as new subjects brought

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under Japanese rule through imperial expansion, had to be taught that their principal ties were not to their community, locality, or non-Japanese ethnicity but rather to the state as embodied by the emperor. Once they learned this lesson—and in the case of peasants, Ainu, and Okinawans at least, they did so by the early twentieth century, although not nearly as thoroughly as the authorities wished—Japan attained its version of modernity.

ENDNOTES

[1]The two notable exceptions are John W. Hall, "Rule by Status in Tokugawa Japan," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 1 (1) (Autumn 1974): 39–49, and particularly Herman Ooms, *Tokugawa Village Practice: Class, Status, Power, Law* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1996). Ooms uses status both in the sense employed here and, following Pierre Bourdieu, as a broader measure of peasants' standing within the village community (see ibid., 125–137).

[2]A useful introduction to status in early modern society is Asao Naohiro, "Kinsei no mibun to sono hen'yō," in Asao Naohiro, ed., *Mibun to kakushiki* (*Nihon no kinsei,* vol. 7) (Tokyo: Chūō kōronsha, 1992), 7–40; see also Yamamoto Naotomo, "Kinsei shakai to sono mibun: Jo ni kaete," in Kyōto burakushi kenkyūjo, ed., *Kinsei no minshū to geinō* (Kyoto: Aunsha, 1989), 1–12.

[3]The term "outcaste" is problematic, as Tokugawa Japan was not a caste society, but I shall follow conventional usage here. Its use has been proposed most systematically by George DeVos and Hiroshi Wagatsuma, "The Problem: Caste and Race, a Syncretic View," in George DeVos and Hiroshi Wagatsuma, eds., *Japan's Invisible Race* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1966), xix–xxiii.

[4]Tsukada Takashi, *Kinsei Nihon mibunsei no kenkyū* (Kobe: Hyōgo buraku mondai kenkyūjo, 1987), 287–307. Tsukada Takashi, *Mibunsei shakai to shimin shakai: Kinsei Nihon no shakai to hō* (Tokyo: Kashiwa shobō, 1992), 19–21, differentiates between status (*mibun*) and condition (*jōtai*). He sees the increasing appearance, particularly after the 1790s, of people such as the homeless, whose status and condition did not coincide, as evidence of collapsing status boundaries.

[5]Hall, "Rule by Status," 48.

[6]Yamamoto, "Kinsei shakai to sono mibun," 3. *Sabetsu* might also be translated as "differentiation," for social relations between members of different status groups—such as dealings between townspeople and samurai—did not necessarily entail prejudice or intolerance.

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[7]On discrimination in post–World War II Japan, see David L. Howell, "Ethnicity and Culture in Contemporary Japan," *Journal of Contemporary History* 31 (1) (January 1996): 171–190.

[8]Katō Yasuaki, "Kinsei no shōgaisha to mibun seido," in Asao, ed., *Mibun to kakushiki,* 125–178. The *tōdō* antedated the establishment of the Tokugawa shogunate, but it acquired its centrally recognized administrative authority only in the seventeenth century.

[9]On the boundaries of the medieval polity, see Kikuchi Isao, "Kyōkai to etonosu," in Arano Yasunori, Ishii Masatoshi, and Murai Shōsuke, eds., *Chiiki to etonosu* (*Ajia no naka no Nihonshi,* vol. 4) (Tokyo: Tōkyō daigaku shuppankai, 1992), 57; see also Murai Shōsuke, "Kenmu, Muromachi seiken to higashi Ajia," in Rekishigaku kenkyūkai and Nihonshi kenkyūkai, eds., *Kōza Nihon rekishi,* 13 vols. (Tokyo: Tōkyō daigaku shuppankai, 1985), 4: 1–42; Murai Shōsuke, *Ajia no naka no chūsei Nihon* (Tokyo: Azekura shobō, 1988).

[10]For an excellent and innovative treatment of boundaries in another Asian society, see Thongchai Winichakul, *Siam Mapped: The Geo-body of a Nation* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994).

[11]For a discussion of the boundaries of the city of Edo that illustrates this point, see Katō Takashi, "Governing Edo," in James L. McClain, John M. Merriman, and Ugawa Kaoru, eds., *Edo and Paris: Urban Life and the State in the Early Modern Era* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1994), 41–67.

[12]Hatanaka Toshiyuki, "Kinsei 'senmin' mibunron no kadai," in Aoki Michio and Hosaka Satoru, eds., *Sōten: Nihon no rekishi: Kinsei hen* (Tokyo: Shinjinbutsu ōraisha, 1991), 176–178.

[13]There were some exceptions to this general rule. See Hatanaka Toshiyuki, *Kinsei sonraku shakai no mibun kōzō* (Kyoto: Buraku mondai kenkyūjo, 1990), 11–41.

[14]See the panel discussion in Kyōto burakushi kenkyūjo, ed., *Kinsei no minshū to geinō,* 196–197. The power of political authorities to dictate status disadvantaged the *eta* doubly, first by denying their communities the autonomy enjoyed by peasants of commoner status and second by perpetuating discrimination against them by forcing them to maintain ties to activities considered to be unclean. On the other hand, their status-based monopoly over outcaste occupations (particularly leather-working) appears in at least some cases to have fostered a measure of economic prosperity, reflected in part in an *eta* population that rose steadily throughout the Tokugawa period. See Hatanaka, "Kinsei 'senmin' mibunron no kadai," 176–183. However, the village examined by Dana Morris and Thomas C. Smith, "Fertility and Mortality in an Outcaste Village in Japan, 1750–1869," in Susan B. Hanley and Arthur P. Wolf, eds., *Family and Population in East Asian History* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1985), 229–246, was marked by extreme poverty despite a heavy reliance on outcaste occupations.

[15]On groups bound to the Tsuchimikado house, see Yamamoto Naotomo, "Innai: Koyomi o uri, uranai ya kitō o suru," in Kyōto burakushi kenkyūjo, ed., *Kinsei no minshū to geinō,* 30–34, and Yamaji Kōzō, "Manzai: Danna o

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tayori, teritorii o kakuritsu," in ibid., 65–71; on the *ebune*, see Kawaoka Takeharu, *Umi no tami* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1987).

[16]See, for example, the case of the *eta* doctor who was denied elevation to commoner status by the head of the Kantō *eta*, Danzaemon, cited in Asao, "Kinsei no mibun to sono hen'yō," 7–10.

[17]Donald H. Shively, "Sumptuary Regulation and Status in Early Tokugawa Japan," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 25 (1964–1965): 123–164. The decrees' notorious lack of efficacy does not diminish their significance.

[18]This practice was quite common. For one example, see the case of Kane, adopted in 1860 by her employer, Yanagioka Heinai, preparatory to marriage to Kawai Eikichi, in "Hayashi-ke monjo: Ban nikki" [1860–1866], in Matsumae chō shi henshūshitsu, ed., *Matsumae chō shi: Shiryōhen* (Matsumae: Matsumae chō, 1977), 2: 691.

[19]See Hatanaka Toshiyuki, "Mibun o koeru toki," in Tsukada Takashi, Yoshida Nobuyuki, and Wakita Osamu, eds., *Mibunteki shūen* (Kyoto: Buraku mondai kenkyūjo, 1994), 403–460.

[20]Kikuchi Shunsuke, ed., *Tokugawa kinreikō*, 6 vols. (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1931–1932), 5: 539–540.

[21]Yokokawa Ryōsuke, "Naishiryaku" [c. 1854], in Iwate kenritsu toshokan, ed., *Iwate shisō*, vols. 1–5 (Morioka: Iwate ken bunkazai aigo kyōkai, 1974), 3: 209–233. I discuss the incident at length in "Private Violence and Public Virtue in Late Tokugawa Japan" (unpublished paper, 1997).

[22]Takayanagi Kaneyoshi, *Edo no daidōgei* (Tokyo: Kashiwa shobō, 1982), 29–30.

[23]On federalism, see Mary Elizabeth Berry, *Hideyoshi* (Cambridge, Mass.: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1982); absolutism, James W. White, "State Growth and Popular Protest in Tokugawa Japan," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 14 (1988): 1–25 and Eiko Ikegami, *Taming the Samurai* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995); flamboyant state, Philip C. Brown, *Central Authority and Local Autonomy in the Formation of Early Modern Japan: The Case of Kaga Domain* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1993); compound state, Mark Ravina, "State-building and Political Economy in Early-modern Japan," *Journal of Asian Studies* 54 (4) (November 1995): 997–1022.

[24]See Edwin O. Reischauer, "Japanese Feudalism," in Rushton Coulborn, ed., *Feudalism in History* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1956), 26–48; John W. Hall, "Feudalism in Japan—A Reassessment," in John W. Hall and Marius B. Jansen, eds., *Studies in the Institutional History of Early Modern Japan* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1968), 15–51; Joseph R. Strayer, "The Tokugawa Period and Japanese Feudalism," in ibid., 1–15; and Peter Duus, *Feudalism in Japan*, 2d ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1976).

[25]Rodney Hilton, "Introduction," in Hilton, ed., *The Transition from Feudalism to Capitalism* (London: Verso Editions, 1978), 30.

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[26]On the *kokudaka* system, see Wakita Osamu, "The *Kokudaka* System: A Device for Unification," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 1 (2) (Summer 1975): 297–320.

[27]Ronald P. Toby, *State and Diplomacy in Early Modern Japan* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984); see also Arano Yasunori, *Kinsei Nihon to higashi Ajia* (Tokyo: Tōkyō daigaku shuppankai, 1988).

[28]See Murai, *Ajia no naka no chūsei Nihon*, 32–59, and Hino Tatsuo, "Kinsei bungaku ni arawareta ikokuzō," in Asao Naohiro, ed., *Sekaishi no naka no kinsei* (*Nihon no kinsei*, vol. 1) (Tokyo: Chūō kōronsha, 1991), 265–304.

[29]On relations with Korea, see Tashiro Kazui, "Foreign Relations during the Edo Period: *Sakoku* Reexamined," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 8 (2) (Summer 1982): 283–306; the Matsumae domain's relations with the Ainu are discussed by David L. Howell, "Ainu Ethnicity and the Boundaries of the Early Modern Japanese State," *Past and Present* 142 (February 1994): 69–93.

[30]Asato Susumu, "Ryūkyū ōkoku no keisei," in Arano et al., eds., *Chiiki to etonosu*, 128–129.

[31]See David L. Howell, *Capitalism from Within: Economy, Society, and the State in a Japanese Fishery* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1995), 27–35.

[32]Kamiya Nobuyuki, "Kinsei no tōitsu to Dattan," in Tanaka Takeo, ed., *Nihon zenkindai no kokka to taigai kankei* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1987), 145–176.

[33]Howell, "Ainu Ethnicity and the Boundaries of the Early Modern Japanese State"; Kikuchi Isao, *Hoppōshi no naka no kinsei Nihon* (Tokyo: Azekura shobō, 1991).

[34]Bob Tadashi Wakabayashi, *Anti-Foreignism and Western Learning in Early-Modern Japan* (Cambridge, Mass.: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1986), 18–22.

[35]In Tsukamoto's phrase, *inaka wa 'i'-naka* (the countryside [*inaka*] is in the midst [*naka*] of barbarism [*i*]): Tsukamoto Manabu, *Kinsei saikō: Chihō no shiten kara* (Tokyo: Nihon editaa sukūru shuppanbu, 1986), 75–105, esp. 90–97.

[36]Kikuchi Isao, *Bakuhan taisei to Ezochi* (Tokyo: Yūzankaku, 1984), 216–220.

[37]Howell, "Ainu Ethnicity and the Boundaries of the Early Modern Japanese State."

[38]On the purported connections between the outcastes and Ainu, see Ooms, *Tokugawa Village Practice*, 296–298.

[39]"Bunsei roku hitsujidoshi irai Ezojin omemie kenjōhin narabi ni kudasaremono shirabegaki" [c. 1833], Hakodate Municipal Library.

[40]Many restrictive policies toward the outcastes were imposed late in the Tokugawa period, such as rules requiring outcastes to tie their hair with straw or wear leather patches on their kimono. Hatanaka, "Kinsei 'senmin' mibunron no kadai," 181–183.

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[41]See Buyō Inshi, *Seji kenmonroku* [c. 1816], vol. 1 of Honjō Eijirō et al., eds., *Kinsei shakai keizai sōsho,* 12 vols. (Tokyo: Kaizōsha, 1926), 271–274.

[42]See H. D. Harootunian, *Things Seen and Unseen: Discourse and Ideology in Tokugawa Nativism* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1988).

[43]Tsukada Takashi, "Mibun shakai no kaitai: Ōsaka Watanabe mura-Nishihama no jirei kara," *Rekishi hyōron* 527 (March 1994): 73–99.

[44]Thomas C. Smith, *The Agrarian Origins of Modern Japan* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1959), remains the standard treatment of this process.

[45]I develop this point more fully in Howell, *Capitalism from Within,* 44–49, 88–92.

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Mary Elizabeth Berry

Public Life in Authoritarian Japan

ORIENTATIONS

CAN A ROBUST PUBLIC SPHERE coexist with an authoritarian state? The question cuts to the bone of Japanese politics before 1945. Pushed hard, most historians of Japan would answer (if guardedly) "no." My own answer is "yes," on the condition that we detach the public sphere from the telos of democracy.

The authoritarianism of Japanese regimes before the Allied Occupation is a simple matter of fact. Throughout the early modern period, hereditary martial elites monopolized the coercive powers of governance. During the better part of the modern period sovereignty resided in the monarch, who was advised by appointive, supraparliamentary organs of rule. Independent of popular control, pre-occupation regimes remained unfettered, too, by popular rights. Neither in law nor in practice did unconditional freedoms of speech, assembly, or belief protect the social voice. Censorship and surveillance attended all social representations.

The break came by fiat. The Allied-drafted constitution of 1946 declared the "Japanese people" both sovereign and possessed of "eternal and inviolate" human rights. No indigenous democratic insurgency before World War II had anticipated the change. The liberal vanguard had embraced the ballot but not any consequent surrender of imperial authority, the dignity of the subject but not any consequent entitlement of the citizen.

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How, then, are we to understand the relationship between state and society in Japan before the break? Do we find a "public sphere" of nonofficial opinion and voluntary action that was brought to bear, as a legitimate extension of an autonomous society, on state power?

Some historians deny altogether the existence of a Japanese public sphere before the occupation. They emphasize the docility of a public habituated to obedience or (what is much the same thing) the lumpishness of a public that an activist state had to prod into purpose. Softer versions echo in claims that state and society tend to merge in Japan: the state absorbed a society lacking self-consciousness and the capacity for autonomous action.[1]

But most scholars find such claims untenable. They are vexed by state-society relations precisely because the evidence for a vigorous public life is strong. Early modernity saw routine political agitation among peasants and townspeople, heterodox philosophy and social dissent in burgeoning academies, and a critique of normative culture throughout the theater and literary circles. Modernity saw a flourishing popular press, party and union formation, mounting diversity in religion and schooling, and voluntary organization of virtually every sort.

Hence the problem. Given evidence of a healthy public sphere, the survival of an authoritarian state largely accepted by Japanese subjects seems anomalous. Something must have gone wrong, at least if we presume both an inherent competition for power between state and society and the likelihood that a driven, tenacious society will win. Indeed, these presumptions dominate historical circles, where detecting just what did go wrong remains an important enterprise. The debate tends to center on four positions, all of them attentive to the ultimate weakness of a public sphere that, though never negligible, was never strong enough either.

The most optimistic case for the public sphere comes from the "gradualists" (as I shall call them). These scholars, whose departure point is normally the Meiji period, portray a Japanese society constrained by disadvantages—notably, habits of feudal deference and an acute backwardness, economic as well as military—that amplified the role of authority. Against punishing

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odds, nonetheless, society gained leverage over the state. A breakthrough to popular governance seemed likely between 1918 and 1931 when political parties dominated the selection of prime ministers and their cabinets. Never inevitable, the reversal of liberalism occurred with the swell of right-wing violence, rampant militarism, and the colossal failures of a leadership in crisis.[2]

At the other end of the spectrum, the "realists" find a persistently repressive state. If it could tolerate a limited party politics convergent with its own interests, that state steadily fought both liberal and leftist society through controls on speech and assembly, police harassment, and the imprisonment or execution of radical dissenters. Infantilization, however, was the preferred weapon. The state tried to choke liberal energy in the cradle, using chauvinist schools to incapacitate free thought. The repression of the 1930s was no surprise turnaround but rather the characteristic modus operandi of a supremacist state. While the realists diverge in perceptions of the public sphere (some focus on the valor of dissenters, others on the social torpor enforced by authorities), they are alike in finding the liberality of the gradualists chimerical.[3]

A classical question organizes the debate between the gradualists and the realists: who had the upper hand in the competition between state and society? For the other two parties to discussions of Japan's public sphere the question turns not on competition but on corruption: what infected the public sphere internally? Perhaps more keenly than the optimistic gradualists, these parties discern enormous potential in public life—particularly in the press, the academy, and radical political movements—that might well have overcome historical disadvantages as well as state repression. The final flaccidity of the public sphere, they believe, was not a matter of external crises or pernicious adversaries; it came from within.

The "materialists" tote up the gains provided by the state. Not only did the Meiji oligarchs anticipate the more ambitious agendas for reform (from public education and conscription to private land ownership); successive regimes improved most standards of life. Other gains—from Japan's recognition as an international power to its penetration of world markets—nour-

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ished patriotic confidence in the government. In short, an activist state undercut the resistance vital to a public sphere, particularly compromising the growing middle class that might have led it. Potential public leaders chose the favorable outcomes delivered by the state over the changes in governing process that only tireless dissent could have achieved.[4]

The "idealists" grapple not with worldly reward but with psychological mystery. They note not only the deference of liberals to imperial sovereignty but the identification of the most principled public critics with a state that, however flawed, remained their center of value. The idealists are particularly concerned with the acquiescence of these principled critics to the state violence that escalated in the 1930s and 1940s. And they find explanations neither in materialist incentives nor in personal fears of reprisal. Their explanations hinge partly on what we might call monotheism: most public men lacked—outside the state—the alternative gods (of transcendent conscience, for example) that might have legitimated renunciation of a bad regime. Yet monotheism was not so much a default position, in the view of the idealists, as an absolutist philosophy that hallowed the state as the best hope of humanity in secular time and space. Since state collapse presaged chaos, even a bad state could not be renounced.[5]

All four positions, as often complementary as they are antagonistic, associate the survival of authoritarian rule with inadequate resistance from the public sphere—which was variously hobbled by crisis and repression or subverted by collusionist values. This critique of a somehow deformed public sphere is inspired in good measure by a teleology that links public life to broadly democratic goals. Whether or not we model public spheres on the European experience, historians tend to plot social activism on a trajectory that leads toward popular governance. Because Japan moved so uncertainly along this trajectory, runs the argument, the public sphere must have been ill-developed.

The critique acquires its power, however, from the shame of the Pacific War, which inescapably shapes discussions of modern Japanese society. Coupling authoritarian rule with the crimes of the Japanese state, historians have also implicated a deformed

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public sphere. Society failed to tame a lawless government. The argument could serve to exculpate the people, insofar as it was not a democratic regime that waged war. But instead the argument tends to exculpate, indeed to hallow, democracy itself. Behind discussion of Japan's deformed public sphere is an "if only" mentality: if only freedom of speech or popular sovereignty had been achieved, then. . . .

Until recently, postwar Japanese liberals remained largely free of the anxiety over democracy that has long riven a West where popular sovereignty proved no protection against state crimes.[6] Only as decades of experience have exposed its perils and limits has democracy lost what in Japan has long been its almost romantic character. It remains, however, the compelling antithesis to everything repugnant in the legacy of authoritarianism and total war. That legacy and the countervailing ideal of democratic rule have urgently determined discussion of Japan's public sphere.

AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH

I have no interest in rescuing Japan's public sphere from judgments of failure. But I do want to suggest an alternative approach to interpretation by thinking about Japan's public sphere on its own terms. Let me begin with the proposition that, excepting the far Left, the prewar public sphere aimed at neither popular rule nor unconditional popular rights. Let me suggest, further, that its values were not partial or immature variants on democratic themes but the very inverse of democratic values.

Democracy submits government to social control because it is premised on the superiority of the people to the state. For some of its advocates, democratic governance is animated by idealism—by the exaltation of a people presumed capable of virtue and thus inherently superior as the source of legitimate rule. But for at least as many, the system is hammered out of cynicism: the people, though riven with interest, remain a lesser evil than an autonomous leadership. More suspicious of leaders than people, the polity is founded on the values of pluralist debate and pragmatic compromise. It must consequently tolerate a high degree of division and indecision, review and rever-

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sal. It must concede disparate visions of the good and multiple centers of value.

Authoritarianism elevates the state above social control because it is premised on the superiority of rulers to the people. For some in Japan, authoritarianism was animated by idealism—by the exaltation of a leadership (ultimately an emperor) presumed capable of wisdom and thus inherently superior. But for at least as many cynics, a flawed leadership remained a lesser evil than a popular cacophony. Leaders might be tempered—by fierce eligibility requirements, ruthless competition for and within office, an ideology of public service and imperial devotion, and the surveillance of critics. The people, however, were an imponderable variable—divided in interest, disparate in achievement, viscous in movement. More suspicious of people than leaders, the polity was founded on the values of responsibility and expertise in officials, clarity and transcendence in decisions. It consequently had to tolerate the ultimate independence of leaders from public opinion. It had to imagine an ultimate community of national interest.

It is important to remark that the ambivalence we take for granted in democracies was no less acute in authoritarian Japan, a point easy to overlook. If democrats ultimately assign power to the people, they nonetheless do ceaseless battle over the distribution and exercise of authority. Thus they fashion manifold versions of popular sovereignty, not infrequently with substantial concessions to powerful leaderships. So, too, if authoritarians ultimately assign power to the state, their social views are as disparate as their particular formulas of rule, which may accord substantial roles to the people.

It is equally important to remark, however, that democracy and authoritarianism remain different modes of power—not points on a spectrum of development that incrementally connects one to the other. To the gradualists, the election of the lower house in Japan's parliament, as well as the accompanying vitality of political culture, can look like movement along such a spectrum. Hence the use of a democratic telos may seem appropriately internal to the Japanese experience. But this approach mistakes the variable attributes of a system for the system itself, conflating a certain resilience in practice with a conver-

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sion in ideology. However steadily we may note adaptations in the Japanese political process, any transfer from imperial to popular sovereignty would have required a vast leap in ideological register—not movement along a spectrum.

The evidence of a robust public sphere, so compelling to the gradualists, is real enough. But we do not have to imagine a protodemocracy to make sense of it. Let us take Japan's liberal theorists at their word. Yoshino Sakuzō, to cite an eminent example, argued that "minority rule is always government in a dark chamber" where "excesses" and "abuses" are given license. Thus he insisted that policy be set "in accordance with the people's opinions" and that suffrage be extended to guarantee a "just and equitable" government devoted to "the welfare of the people." At the same time, Yoshino rejected "the dangerous theory of popular sovereignty," embracing "loyalty to the emperor" as the "essence of our national polity."[7] Like the overwhelming majority of political actors in pre-occupation Japan, Yoshino Sakuzō continued to accept the premise of authoritarian rule: the power of decision lay finally in a leadership subordinate only to a sovereign emperor. The challenge is to reconcile this authoritarian premise with the role claimed for popular "opinion" in opposition to "minority rule."

The solution, I believe, is to regard Japan's public sphere not as the space where popular sovereignty was claimed but where leadership was scrutinized and disciplined by criticism. That public sphere aimed at the integrity of rulers rather than at direct power. Ceding authority to a leadership, the public did not cede the prerogative—exercised mercilessly—to harrow that leadership through agitation. Agitation took three conventional forms: debate over the organization of the leadership and the very criteria for selecting it; demands for wide access to leaders expected both to heed the public voice and delegate powers of governance; and open, often vituperative, remonstration against the vices and ill-judgment of leaders. If there are powerful resonances here with democratic practice, the values diverged. Actors in Japan's public sphere presumed a vital membership in the polity without presuming control of it.

In short, authoritarianism went together in Japan with rancorous conflict against authority. Although this paradox should

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not mystify democrats accustomed to endless sallies against ignorant citizens and the representatives they choose, we balk at the possibility that authoritarianism can be congruent with nondemocratic dissent. Yet here we find the peculiar idealism of prewar Japanese politics: a responsible leadership under remorseless scrutiny—but only and indispensably under scrutiny—was judged more tractable than mass rule.

By linking Japan's prewar public sphere to scrutiny of the leadership rather than popular sovereignty I neither recommend the model nor diminish its consequences. The linkage does permit us, however, to trace an internal logic in Japanese politics without undo emphasis on anomalies. It also permits us to ask historical questions focused on the dynamic of that logic.

EARLY MODERN AUTHORITARIANISM: IDEOLOGY AND CONDITIONS

Two intertwined questions concern me throughout the balance of the essay. What made authoritarian rule bearable in Japan? What form in practice did the public sphere take? I address both questions in the early modern context, with concluding references to the modern experience. Such an emphasis permits the long view of public life that has been vital to our understanding of public spheres in the West. Certainly early modernity and modernity have a fractured relationship. Still, the continuity in authoritarian rule across the divide invites reflection on the deeper continuities in social structure that sustained autonomous states in Japan.

The first question assumes that something other than repression and ignorance sustained authoritarian rule. And the most obvious answer is ideological: people bore up under authoritarian rule because they had learned to believe in it. Although ideological arguments are invariably circular, ideological rationales for authoritarianism are not all the same.

In early modern Japan hereditary power centered in the shogun of the Tokugawa line (in office from 1603 until 1868) and devolved on roughly 250 daimyo who administered semiautonomous domains in a federal form of rule. Under the daimyo a large body of samurai officials executed the primary tasks of

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governance. This community of power also constituted the highest order in an encompassing system of social status. The system classified all persons in hereditary groups (most broadly those of samurai, peasants, artisans, and merchants) and regulated most aspects of being. Thus identification as a samurai, for example, denoted ancestry, profession, residential and marital choices, education, treatment before the law, and codes of dress, diet, and etiquette. Further, status prescribed both the formal duties (*yaku*) and the general obligations (*giri*) of the members of each order. While *yaku* defined the specific (tax and work burdens), *giri* defined an embracing ethos of service and subordination to the collective, typically in the person of the lord.

Exquisitely discriminating in hierarchy, the status system was nonetheless integral in ideology. In theory, status groups were interdependent parts of a polity that required equally faithful service from necessarily differentiated servants. Service was not expedient work but an indispensable act of virtue and belonging. Nor was service interchangeable. Strength and concord in the polity required discretion, not permeability, in roles. Finally, the system was continuous (and essentially Confucian) in the conception of human relations. Parent, husband, older brother, and lord were ideally extensions of each other rather than independent agents or contenders.[8]

By imagining mutuality and reciprocity between people and leaders, a hierarchical and absolutist ideology of power left room for the notion of social contract.[9] And violations of the contract invited popular remonstration with rulers—an act that could legitimately pry open a public sphere. Still, a certain resilience in ideology is hardly sufficient to make authoritarianism berable. The structures and exercise of power must be tensile as well. Two conditions of rule in early modern Japan were crucial to both the survival of authoritarianism and the cultivation of a public sphere.

First, the polity was based on an uncomfortable leadership. The high leadership—the shogun and several hundred daimyo—emerged from a long civil war that ended in an uneasy peace premised on federation. This legacy continued to matter: throughout the early modern period the central powers of the Tokugawa

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shogunate were compromised, and contended, by local lords. The secondary leadership—several hundred thousand samurai—emerged from this settlement transformed. As a condition of peace, most samurai were converted from fief holders resident in villages to salaried retainers resident in cities. Designed to isolate warriors from the land bases and local followings that could sustain rebellion, the policy produced a strange elite (lacking, as far as I know, any counterpart elsewhere). In the first instance, successful pacification created peacetime soldiers without any practical military function beyond policing. Further, the samurai survived as an elite without land and, below the highest ranks, one in persistent economic trouble. Perhaps most demoralizing, the samurai made up an enormous group (with their families, up to 8 percent of the population) with limited hopes of active service; administrative posts in shogunal and daimyo bureaucracies remained far fewer than the number of eligible candidates. Nor were those posts filled systematically after candidates completed some formal regimen of training. There was no Chinese-style examination system in Japan, nor any alternative discipline, that could rationalize appointment and focus samurai energy. Selection was a mixed affair of patronage and parentage, talent and skill, career profile and ambition.

Thus the discomfort of the leadership was compounded of many factors: distrust within the daimyo fraternity; competition within a vast samurai community highly differentiated in rank; an often substantial gap between the prestige of high status and the embarrassment of low incomes; and an intense anxiety over function and purpose. For those governed by the early modern polity, these conditions served to disperse and temper the weight of authoritarian rule. Caution, initiative followed by retreat, factionalism and disabling contests over precedence, local variants in policy—these were the hallmarks of a system checked from within.

Just as important, elite discomfort encouraged a complex psychology of leadership. On the one hand, the samurai were dependent, presumptively loyal functionaries in a polity that paid them and protected their honor. On the other hand, the samurai were paid poorly, underemployed, and undisciplined by system-

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atic training. Conducive to independence and skepticism, such factors led the samurai to fashion roles for themselves. They increasingly detached the notion of service from old values—from martial proficiency, submission to individual lords, even hereditary calling—and attached it to new ones. Samurai dedicated themselves to learning and learned criticism of the regime, to diverse "public" work that embraced education, medicine, writing, and research on subjects as varied as agronomy and anatomy. If the leadership ideal remained tied to the sheer power of command in a vertical hierarchy of blood, it was also loosened substantially to value merit and public service.[10] And, again, for those governed by the early modern polity the result was a blunted authoritarianism.

A second condition of rule that made authoritarianism bearable concerns the daily exercise of power—the regime governed through local, nonsamurai organs. A degree of autonomy in rural villages, where over 80 percent of the population lived, derived from the very remoteness of samurai who were neither village residents nor landholders. Although the shogun and daimyo held proprietary jurisdiction over the land, the practical exercises of ownership belonged to a highly stratified peasantry. A degree of autonomy derived, too, from wartime legacies; rebellious villages had developed internal organs of rule that continued to dominate local adminstration. The regime effectively traded local latitude over internal affairs (such as discipline and conciliation, tax collection, public works and commons) for submission to state authority. Further, the regime effectively absorbed local powers as what I call "nonsamurai near-officials." Free with modest social honors and titles, the elite recruited the upper stratum of agrarian society to marginal membership in its ranks.

All regimes absorb, to some extent, ancillary powers and men of influence; but the practice in early modern Japan affected very large numbers. Tens of thousands of villages produced headmen, local councils, shrine societies, and youth groups. Variously compromised by affiliation with their samurai masters, these near-officials also swelled dramatically the cohort of "public men" in Japan—the men who legitimately assumed a public role and, potentially, a public voice of dissent.

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A similar dynamic operated in the cities. Urban commoners became "nonsamurai near-officials" largely because of the disengagement of the elite from routine commercial management. A combination of inexperience and cultural taboo separated samurai from a market they surrendered—again with appointments and petty honors—to semiofficial townsmen: brokers of rice and other major commodities, licensed transporters and wholesalers, gold and silver guildsmen, currency traders and lenders. Partially overlapping this community of mercantile prestige was the vast body of neighborhood elders—from tens of thousands of block associations in hundreds of towns and cities—who governed their neighbors as headmen governed their villages.[11]

In sum, authoritarian rule in Tokugawa Japan had a peculiar profile. Both the divisions within an uncomfortable leadership and the prominence of "nonsamurai near-officials" in local administration mitigated the features of authoritarian command. Coupled with an ideology of universal membership and reciprocal obligation in the polity, these structures helped make that polity bearable. The combination of ideology and structure was crucial in opening a space for a distinctive sort of public life.

THE EARLY MODERN PUBLIC SPHERE

Four types of activity defined Japan's early modern public sphere—the sphere of voluntary initiative and agitation in which nonofficials claimed a role in the political arena. I view this public action as systemic and normal. It developed within and as a consequence of a polity that public actors took for granted. It also became inherent to political life as tolerable practice. Thus I depart from interpretations that find public action contradictory to authoritarian rule, potentially revolutionary, and ultimately abortive. Within a resolutely conservative public sphere, however, the relationship between leaders and subjects changed substantially.

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Normal Politics in the Village

A volatile politics in agrarian Japan was guaranteed by the absence of samurai and the centrality to daily administration of village headmen and councils. Conflict that might have been suppressed by a martial presence or deflected to absentee authorities had to be managed, in the first instance, by neighbors who became practiced in grievance. Grievance, of course, was endemic—over access to water and other resources, loans and foreclosures, communal work, crime and punishment, status distinctions, and membership in governing bodies. Grievance was particularly raw over the matter of tax assignment and collection, a responsibility lodged firmly by samurai authorities in the village community itself.

Certainly this reliance on self-governance reflected an official intention to localize conflict and hence divert it from the regime. But the policy also accustomed villagers to leadership, political organization, negotiation, and an active stake in decisions. And these habits soon led grievants beyond the village—sometimes to appeal internal decisions, more often to accuse samurai authorities of ill-rule. Any hope that village boundaries might contain conflict was foolhardy. Three forms of public action—uprisings, petitions, and suits—became staples of peasant protest. Particularly through uprisings—substantial enough to enter the record on over seventy-three hundred occasions—villagers enacted a collective public presence.[12]

Peasants protested unfair taxes, emergency levies, efforts to examine harvests and recalculate dues, and intrusions into village governance. They also protested what they saw as bad policy: commercial and transport monopolies that constrained their markets, corvée demands that straitened their resources, usurious lending rates, inadequate relief measures during disasters. No less vehemently, they protested the personal misconduct of officials: bribery, partiality, rank ignorance of local conditions, arrogance, lavish spending. They lodged their protests, moreover, in the rhetoric of the polity. The documents accompanying uprisings invoked the interdependence of status groups entangled by mutual responsibility. Thus, grievance arose through violations of official obligation, it injured parties faithful in

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their own discharge of duty, and surely it would be corrected by humane officials mindful of rightful principles.

Yet it was not just ideology, or even village-bred political habits, that enabled protest in the public arena. Unlike their ancestors, landholders in Tokugawa-era villages were registered in systematic cadastres and accountable for systematic taxes imposed impersonally. Medieval structures of patronage and clientage withered. Provoked by the high elite's resolve to break fiefdoms, the change objectified relations in land. The regime effectively confirmed private land ownership by villagers in exchange for routinized taxation. Although the great majority of peasants remained marginal or dependent holders, local land control and the collective payment of taxes invested villagers in the polity. They held (or might hold) their own property. They surrendered part of their produce to officials—notably to officials who did not hold property themselves and were thus uniquely dependent—to support the state. Hence villagers were ready to take authorities to account, rebuking the bad policy and the bad men jeopardizing their investments.

Historians of Tokugawa villages have been acutely attentive to the constraints on peasants and the conservatism of their protests. Denied military power, social mobility, and participation in official bureaucracies, peasants also suffered from internal cleavages that broke unified resistance to the regime. Self-government, which tended to mean self-regulation within the confines of an exploitative state, only exacerbated the internal enmities that worked to the advantage of the authorities. Within this context, movement toward change remained reformist rather than radical, heavier in compliance than defiance, more riven by minor gradations in prestige than gross divisions in power. And not so ironically, protest was doubtless most conservative in effect when it was most successful. Whether grievants won immediate redress or abated future impositions, their actions exposed the major fault lines in the system, warning officials against widening those fissures into chasms.

But this is really my point. The routinization of agrarian politics, through thousands of conventionalized uprisings, put the regime under constraints no less real than those on peasants. By defining fault lines, protesters put their gravest interests

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beyond the reach of any but the most reckless rulers. It is a marvel of Tokugawa history that taxes declined steadily as a percentage of yields. It is a marvel that superfluous samurai remained landless urban tenants as villagers held on to land and a degree of local autonomy.[13]

Debate in the Academy: Toward Expertise and Merit

Another marvel of the Tokugawa period is the very survival of the samurai—a huge hereditary elite without clear purpose or sufficient employment. Indeed, in many ways the samurai did not survive. No more monolithic a class than the multifarious peasantry, the group ranged from the outset in rank and income and, with time, in work and attribute. Some samurai—brilliantly educated and luxuriously provisioned—assumed great offices and wielded considerable influence. Others—barely literate and uncertainly provided—curried horses and took in piecework. Notions of a coherent elite, rich in prestige and power, were a fiction.

Certainly the regime propped up its deputies with legal privileges and sumptuary laws. Certainly, too, self-appointed custodians of culture built up the samurai with ennobling images. They constructed a samurai tradition—made of history and genealogy, language and etiquette—meant to provide identities for men sorely in need of them.[14] But the tenuous survival of the samurai owed most to a new definition of function, a daily reason for being. The shogunal advisor Hayashi Razan framed the foundational definition: "A man who is of inner worth and upright conduct, who has moral principles and mastery of the arts, is called a samurai. A man who pursues learning, too, is called a samurai."[15] Razan and successive commentators linked the samurai to virtue. Achieved through the sort of self-cultivation other men were too busy to pursue, this virtue would serve as a universal example and thus inspire concord throughout the realm. Self-cultivation, moreover, was linked to learning—not to an instrumental education tailored to work, but to lifelong inquiry into the teachings of the masters.

The most pervasive result of such formulations was samurai schooling and employment in schools. They began by creating academies for themselves. These were diverse and contentious,

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since the absence of an examination system released scholars from an orthodox canon and orthodox interpretation. And as the academies turned out large numbers of educated men, the samurai took to opening their own schools and roving about as freelance tutors. They also practiced medicine and wrote for commercial publishers.[16]

The identification of samurai with moral cultivation and scholarship gave purpose to an anachronistic elite. But it had two additional, and unforeseen, consequences, both crucial to the development of a public sphere tied to a dissenting academy. First, the redefinition of the samurai encouraged a redefinition of service, which was no longer just a job. Passive learning became active service as samurai both in and out of official posts voluntarily raised their educated voices—often and inventively—on the subject of rule. Ogyū Sorai (1666–1728) urged the shogunate to return military men to the land, where they might live as cultivators rather than parasitic urban stipendiaries. Kumazawa Banzan (1619–1691) condemned the deflation of rice prices that punished both producers and samurai (who in "innumerable cases" were "starving to death") and urged the shogunate to fix rice prices. Kaiho Seiryō (1755–1817) urged the shogunate to contract the numbers of priests and samurai and then put those samurai to work in industry: "It is a ridiculous thing that the courtly and military houses disdain profit." And so forth.[17]

The presumption throughout such debates was that men of virtue and learning had rightful access to rulers compelled to hear (if not heed) them. An angry regime periodically found the presumption intolerable. The discharge or discipline of prominent advisors was ample demonstration of the radicalness not just of their views but of impetuous counsel itself. Nonetheless, samurai intellectuals continued to press opinions generated in many heterodox academies. In the process, they began to detach a polity that was their prime concern from individual rulers whom they could oppose. Nor was it simply the poor policies of those rulers that invited opposition. The daimyo became the target of abandoned perorations for plain personal stupidity. Unemployed samurai heaped opprobrium on men who "were scarcely fit to referee an archery contest, let alone stand as

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judges of other men's qualifications." The daimyo were "willful, weak, pompous, foolish."[18]

Here we find the divisions within a large, competitive leadership that tempered authoritarian rule. More importantly, we find a changing conception of leadership. Loyalty focused on state rather than person, privilege derived from learning rather than status, service discharged through dissent rather than compliance—these were the attributes of a reimagined leadership. A version of the public sphere opened at the very core of an uncomfortable elite.

Debate in a broader public sphere swiftly followed, since the new conception of the elite loosened the very connection between high status and military pedigree. Here was a second consequence of redefining the role of the samurai. If blood and martial profession were insufficient to rationalize and give purpose to the dominant status group, that group was potentially porous. Its crucial features—education and virtue—were potentially universal.

Commoners such as Nakae Chikuzan (1730–1804) took the point. Chikuzan argued that "all human beings were born as sages with virtue" and that the studious cultivation of virtue prepared *any learned man* for "evaluation of the secular world." He himself was not sparing with political counsel to rulers. Chikuzan urged the shogunate to assume central direction over bullion, currency, and mercantile rights (abolishing monopolies along the way); to eliminate the forced residence of the daimyo in Edo (a major source of debt); and to cancel fixed, hereditary samurai stipends in favor of a merit system that would base appointment and salary on performance.[19]

The political commentary of samurai came from men we might call, in Andrew Barshay's terms, "public insiders."[20] Many of them were nonofficials, since they held no formal offices, but all remained nominal members of the ruling elite. The political commentary of commoners, however, came from "public outsiders" who wielded learning instead of status to criticize the polity. They sometimes learned from samurai teachers, sometimes mixed with samurai in schools and academies. They learned, too, in their own academies, where they might instruct samurai disciples.

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The most notable of these schools was the Kaitokudō merchant academy in Osaka (Nakae Chikuzan's school). There, political economy and practical policy were the subjects of research. Epistemology was the ultimate issue. Exalting scientific reason and human agency, the Kaitokudō scholars discounted philosophical absolutes, natural orders, and sage kings. They grounded authority in the proper human response to verifiable knowledge—knowledge of history, natural science, banking and currency, market economics, agrarian practice. In short, they linked good rule to expertise.[21]

This was not a philosophy based on the legitimate oppositional interests of private parties, or even the desirability of a communal voice in the governance of communities. But it was a philosophy that elevated learning over blood privilege in the selection of a ruling elite. The sources and values of this worldview were conservative. The polity was primary; the service of virtuous and learned men was indispensable; the learned elite was to guide the less enlightened. Still, there were big bends in the argument. Learning was not the monopoly of a closed class; learning derived from expert knowledge and scientific analysis of lived experience.

The rise of the academy, the cultivation there of a dissenting public voice for officials and nonofficials alike, and the resulting conception of a meritocratic elite—all these developments were set in motion by the peculiar situation of the samurai. The motion was accelerated, though, by the equally peculiar situation of the merchants. The emphasis of the Kaitokudō scholars on worldly expertise as a criterion for leadership is inseparable from the experience of mercantile enterprise.

If Tokugawa-era samurai lacked employment and opportunity, merchants were surfeited. The retreat of officials from the market left vast arenas open to commoner initiative—banking and finance, manufacture and circulation, entertainment and publishing. These arenas were not protected in law as merchant domains. Always vulnerable to elite control, merchants faced real constraints: licensing requirements, official monopolies, demands for loans, limits on land purchases. But intrusions oscillated and failed to outweigh opportunity and meager taxes. Thus the relationship between merchants and the regime tended

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toward accommodation rather than confrontation, a situation encouraged by the absence of competition from foreign traders. Merchants in Japan did not play the role they sometimes played in the West, forcing openings in the public sphere. We do not discover merchants pressing hard on authorities—for advantageous legislation or the protection of property, for example—in a fashion that cast the state as guardian of private interests.[22]

Yet we do discover subtler pressures. Crucially, merchants assumed the habitual management of market activities along with the attendant tasks of recruiting, training, and organizing labor. By seizing initiatives neglected by the regime itself, entrepreneurs vastly enlarged the arena of commoner enterprise. And, in the process, they vastly enlarged commoner claims to expertise and self-control. This sense of dignity is apparent in merchant household codes, which linked fidelity to calling with service to country, and individual success with corporate virtue.[23] Equating prosperity with honor, the codes implied that when proficient work brought wealth, its holders became substantial members of the polity by definition: wealth signified successful labor, which signified loyal service to the nation.

The dual themes—the pride in expert knowledge and the prestige of successful enterprise—were played out to their logical conclusion at the Kaitokudō academy.

Spreading Information and Instruction in Commercial Print

The treatises written by Tokugawa scholars did not stay in the academy. Many, even the most critical, went into commercial print, connecting both academics and larger audiences in mental dialogues on the polity. Although censorship laws forbade the publication of works on current events and members of the military houses, enforcement was irregular, periodically left to publishers themselves, and avoidable if writers used indirection instead of name-calling. The principal barrier to circulation was language: most academic texts were written in Chinese.[24]

Yet an enormous vernacular literature reached the public as well. Fueled by high literacy rates and expansive urban populations, a printing explosion occurred in early modern Japan. Historians have identified roughly five thousand individual publishing firms that operated during the period (not including

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the unregistered presses operated by the daimyo and underground concerns). And their output was high. A catalogue issued by publishers in Kyoto in 1692, for example, lists almost eight thousand titles in fifty-nine categories available that year in the imperial capital. By 1750, publishers may have been bringing out a thousand new titles annually. In the process, they created both the notion of a public and a domain of public knowledge.[25]

The Tokugawa regime was the original author of publicness in Japan. The disciplines of state-building removed subjects from the discrete, corporate attachments of medieval society into the categorical, universalized relations of early modernity. Systematic cadastres, population registers, and cartographic surveys all imposed standards, classification, and quantification on a people now trained in scrutiny. Both the scrutiny of an impersonal state and the self-scrutiny of compliance constructed one sort of public—a body united by common disciplines and generic attributes.

For readers and the radiating circles around them, print constructed another sort of public—a body united by information. The most remarkable aspect of the publishing explosion was the generation, in simple language and countless revised editions, of empirical texts that minutely and capaciously described contemporary life. Thousands of domestic maps, many based on shogunal surveys, traced the physical and social geography of most spatial units—the nation and its circuits, provinces and cities, individual neighborhoods, brothel and theater zones, forests and hiking trails, and famous places. Spilling beyond cartography, the information texts moved into multiple genres covering inexhaustible subjects. Publishers produced encyclopedias and dictionaries; local gazetteers and urban directories; personnel registries, biographical compendia, and genealogies; geographies and travel guides; ritual and festive calendars; catalogues of everything from manufactures to fine art; and manuals of farming and all manner of craft.

The scrutiny of a knowable and classifiable public that began with the Tokugawa regime was continued by self-styled sociologists and ethnologists. Yet their publications disclosed new assumptions about that public. The public emerged, first of all, as

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a consumer rather than a simple object of knowledge. Publishing at once imagined and helped create large audiences of the curious ready to devour social information. And having imagined a public quite properly interested in itself, the commercial press drew into consciousness ever more varied characterizations of the social body. Much information, derived from official sources, was as prescriptive as it was descriptive. But most texts moved outside, and complicated, normative versions of the polity.

The texts dissected individual cities, for example, exposing the myriad employments and market relations, the webs of entertainment and recreation, the diverse religious practices and civic rituals that undermined one-dimensional models.[26] From cuisine to artistic cultivation, from travel itineraries to schooling opportunities, the informational texts explored cultures and attachments made of ambition and cash, taste and choice. They were not, in effect, about a fixed, presumptively timeless order of closed status groups and an interdependency driven solely by virtue.

More important than the multiplicity of social life, however, was its mutability. Much of the informational literature was obsessed with self-improvement. Toward the lower end of the spectrum, primers and survey texts taught reading, national geography, and basic national history. Toward the upper end of the spectrum, the literature of cultivation taught commoners to be gentlemen—more or less adequate poets, decorative gardeners, fanciers of fine foods, even gods of love (if the reader followed attentively enough *The Great Mirror of Sex*).[27] The middle spectrum was crucial. There, work—and the endless drive toward perfection of skill—was the subject. Sericulture and silvaculture, brewing and craft production—all received attention. But it was farming, with its many individual crops and methods, that consumed the men Thomas C. Smith calls "the technologists." They combined long observation and experimentation with wide travel and interviews to compose manuals that instructed farmers in ever better practices (from the choice of hybrids to the use of fertilizers) and urged farmers to greater refinements on their own, for no practice was *ever* perfect.[28]

The literature of improvement imagined progress and glorified profit. Without directly rebuking the polity, it replaced a

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fixed world with a changing one where performance mattered. Together with the literature of public information, it accustomed readers to the knowability of things and to the power of knowing.

Dangerous Subjects

Because it incorporated popular audiences into the public sphere of knowledge, the library of information and improvement was not a safe place. Neither was it a radical place. Nowhere in these works did writers break the censorship laws to create a periodical press dedicated to "news." Nor did they translate high, often indirect commentary on matters like expertise and bullion policy into frontal demands for change. Their world remained orderly and gradually adaptive. Disorder belonged to the sphere of art and play, the sphere of the private.

At least from the seventh century in Japan, the "public" was a synonym for the good. Denoting just rulers and a harmonious collectivity, it embraced all relations vital to social life—the relations of family and governance, property and economic exchange. The public was the locus of interdependence and value. The "private" was its opposite, not its complement. The private signified the violation of the collectivity through selfishness. It was the partisan, the divisive, vicious, and anti-social.

Particularly from the Tokugawa period, the private also came to be associated with the mysterious. The private was the realm of powerful emotion and physical passion, moral confusion and senselessness. This version of the private could refer alternately to "natural" and appropriate emotion or to libertine excess. Yet in both cases it was dangerous because it was unruly—the source of instability. Hence it was necessary to separate this realm from the public and subordinate it emphatically.[29]

Separation was the Tokugawa solution. One public sphere—of normal politics in the village, dissent in the academy, information and instruction in the book market—operated within the stretching boundaries of the polity. A parallel sphere—of drama, fiction, satiric painting, and poetry—explored the underside and outside of a world that did not reliably make sense. The chief subjects were sex, money, and honor, treated repeatedly in situations meant to disturb. Writers depicted grandmothers con-

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sumed by lust and obsessed with gold, samurai in hock, silly boys living in affluence, misers deceiving their clients, vainglorious warriors reduced to tawdry vendettas, monks marrying into merchant fortunes. Often enough, human appetites appeared as destructive powers that splintered relations and corrupted their captives. But even in moralistic treatments, the sheer exhilaration—and irresistibility—of desire remained palpable. And, often enough, moral structures collapsed. Fiction delighted in the contrast between happy rich charlatans and the unhappy fastidious poor; between glamorous habitues of the brothel quarter and miserable family men; between brilliant entrepreneurs and feckless samurai.[30]

The art of the Tokugawa period took on the deep perversity of experience. Disorder forever reproached the conceit of order. Passion forever contended against a frail, often unrewarding virtue. Hierarchy was rank invention, the awesomeness of the samurai illusory. This art was inherently political, to be sure, and almost certainly emboldened political dissent in the public sphere proper. But it preserved its autonomy through a sort of Faustian compact. In exchange for official tolerance, artists confined their implicit politics to the domain of human folly and private confusion. They honored the public-private divide, relegating to a fictive, alternative world the upheaval of the spirit. In that world, no alternative polity raised its head. For many modern critics, most eminently for Maruyama Masao, this compact sealed the failure of Japanese modernity.[31] An art that disengaged human experience from political criticism was an art that repressed subjectivity and sacrificed social agency. Isolation cuts two ways, however. Removing the polity from art, artists also removed art from the polity. They protected their space from capture.

LEGACIES

The forms of public agitation I have traced here produced a society quite different from its early Tokugawa ancestor. By 1850 an extensively literate, well-informed population was accustomed to managing the agrarian and commercial sectors. It took for granted routine political engagement, as well as social

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mobility within status groups and along their borders. Membership in the polity and access to its leaders, affirmed by Tokugawa ideology, was also confirmed by the self-respect that came with landholding, economic expertise, and wide knowledge of public affairs. Convictions of membership and access resounded in the academy, where commoner intellectuals reconceived the very criteria for leadership on meritocratic principles.

The conservatism of these changes is indisputable. The public sphere operated within the recesses and on the terms of the polity. Public actors remonstrated with bad officials without rejecting officialdom; they reconceived authority in accord with the still-elitist principle of expert performance. If the private sphere of art did battle against stable worldviews, open war—let alone a populist alternative—was never declared. Thus without invoking entirely novel views of power, public action exploited the singular opportunities provided by the Tokugawa settlement itself. The results shaped the Meiji experience.

Historians often tell the Meiji story as if reporting a typhoon. A storm of change seems to have broken after 1868, when self-selected leaders of samurai background dismantled samurai government to build "a rich country and a strong army." Over the next twenty years they would conscript a national soldiery and defeat foreign powers; construct modern systems of finance, communications, and education; lay the foundations for capitalist enterprise and industrialization; and establish a constitutional monarchy. The scope and velocity of their work, even at our historical distance, still catches the breath. Small wonder, then, that the storm outshouts the humdrum. But it is in the humdrum that the fascinating story of Meiji lies.

Cut loose from a very old shogunate, then catapulted into the unknown by a motley gang of would-be leaders, the people of Japan got on with things. No apocalypse, no terror, no paralysis. A polity was wrenched apart while a society of over thirty million continued to function exceptionally well. Taxes got collected, markets worked, villages and cities operated almost normally. And as reform accelerated, a vast number of local functionaries (old and new, appointed and elected) took on the hard daily challenges of appraising land and recalculating taxes, running schools, operating postal and police systems, conscripting

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soldiers, surveying rail lines, and the like. They did this work, moveover, amid administrative commotion. Government at the top was an improvised business of transitory offices and figureheads; government at lower levels was a hectic business of perpetually redrawn jurisdictions and shifting leadership.

Here, in this society of competence and internal coherence, was the society—larger and more resilient than the polity itself—that was produced by the Tokugawa experience. Meiji is incomprehensible without it. Here, too, was a society ready for continued agitation. If there was no apocalypse, there was not much docility either. Social stability came with, and depended on, high levels of activism and dissent—more of the "normal politics" that also belonged to the Tokugawa tradition. Village notables led protests over land valuations and tax rates, for example, winning rate reductions, allowances for poor harvests, and flexibility in forms of payment. They resisted central control over local government. They also joined the urban-based movement for "people's rights" that resulted in elected assemblies at the prefectural and sub-prefectural levels. And to advance their purposes reformers organized political parties and debating societies, newspapers and journals. Increasingly, they focused on two issues stunningly new to Meiji politics: constitutional rule and popular representation.[32]

This escalation of dissent from local problems to the very organization of power brought to a wide public forum questions previously centered in the academy. The questions could be universally broached, however, because of a revolution anticipated, and prepared, by the academy: the rejection of elites created by birth or tradition.

The astonishing development of early Meiji, invariably remarked on by historians, was the disestablishment of a martial elite that was paid off with government bonds (mere pittances in the case of almost all samurai). The obverse of this settlement, equally crucial yet often mentioned in passing, was the confirmation of peasant landholders as owners of private, and now legally protected, property. The Tokugawa legacy lived, but in a form intensely punishing to the old leadership. The wasting elite was left landless, generally near poverty, while farmers retained landed wealth. The scholarship has tended to

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focus on the agrarian problems of high taxation and growing tenantry in the Meiji period. Sharp and wrenching, these problems were nonetheless attended by a certain social equilibrium. Most clearly, the land settlement discharged revolutionary ardor. Immediately vested in the polity, farmers raised their angry voices over land valuation and taxes—not their armed bodies over landholding itself. Further, the settlement dispersed opportunity. Indeed, it distributed capital advantages to landholding farmers. Nowhere was this advantage clearer than in late Meiji voting rolls, where rich farmers outnumbered the samurai who could not meet the property qualifications.[33]

The dispersion of opportunity inherent to the land settlement continued with the early Meiji policies of universal education and male conscription. As samurai and commoners began fading into an undifferentiated community of Japanese "subjects," no automatic privilege—and no entitled body of obvious leaders—survived.[34] This was the Meiji revolution, one founded in a Tokugawa public sphere that had gradually decoupled birth from rightful power. Thus the issues of constitutionalism and representation came to the fore in a society able to think, in original terms, about the distribution of authority. Thus, too, the lacerating debates of Meiji focused always on the question of where authority might properly lie. If public discussion indicated a high degree of consent to new policies, it also revealed ferocious opposition to continued oligarchical rule. The self-selected leadership faced relentless criticism—reminiscent of the invective formerly directed at the *daimyo*—for partiality, factionalism, venality, sublime arrogance, and stupidity. Hence the problem, indeed the opportunity, of devising alternatives.[35]

Forged by two decades of public battle between the oligarchs and their opponents, the Meiji Constitution hewed close to a conservative tradition.[36] The authority of the leadership remained as firm a principle as it had been in the Tokugawa polity. But again, just as the systemic features of that polity had made authoritarianism pliable, so, too, did constitutional structures mitigate the modern variant—this time in law. At the heart of the constitution was the idealist's paradox: the very emperor whose sovereignty defined authoritarian rule was also, in his simultaneous sacrality and identity with "the welfare of all the

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people," the guarantor of good rule. The ultimate check on bad leaders was not a sovereign electorate, as vulnerable to divisive interests as its leaders, but a monarch transcendent and presumptively incorruptible. In the end, authority had to check itself.

Still, the constitution incorporated three further constraints on the leadership that derived from public debate. First, ruling institutions were many, mutually limiting, and finally dependent on monarchical review. The arms of an "octopus" government—the armed services, the ministries, the bureaucracy, the upper and lower houses, the privy council, the judiciary—twined around each other without an integrative command system short of the throne. Movement required either exquisite coordination or a direct appeal for imperial fiat. Oligarchic autocracy was consigned to death.[37]

Second, access to leadership roles was opened and regulated. Article 19 of the constitution specified that "Japanese subjects may, according to qualifications determined in laws and ordinances, be appointed to civil or military or any other public offices equally." The laws regulating the civil service, moreover, identified "qualification" for most offices with success in competitive examinations. And with the opening from the 1880s of national universities—as well as staff colleges for the army, navy, and police—higher education (again, accessible through examination) became the prime determinant of mobility. A meritocracy made of schooling, and of wild public infatuation with schooling, would replace base rulers with "men of talent."[38]

Third, Article 35 of the constitution specified that "The House of Representatives shall be composed of Members elected by the people, according to the provisions of the Law of Election." Article 37 went on: "Every law requires the consent of the Imperial Diet." Eventually extended to all adult males, the franchise and the electoral politics it made possible moved representatives firmly into the constellation of leadership as one more check on high power.

We are now at the place where we began. The working out of Japan's constitutional system was a dynamic process that invites the commentary of gradualists and realists, materialists

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and idealists alike. But if we approach that process as a potentially democratic movement, finally defeated from within or without, we miss the dilemma at the core of both the constitution and the public sphere. The supporters no less than the critics of government worried about how the power of authorities was to be contained. They inherited this problem from their Tokugawa predecessors. And as reformers achieved the most liberal Tokugawa goal, the sundering of authority from blood, they took on the twin challenges of redefining authority and erecting barriers against its misuse. The weight of the evidence, in both law and public response, indicates a presumption of elitist authority—derived now, and consistent with the liberal tradition, from merit, education, and the sternest competition. The evidence also indicates an aversion to corrupt authority rather than a commitment to popular authority. Popular representation was one of many barriers, culminating in the imperial citadel, that would at once defend against misrule and organize the progress of good governors.

The checks and balances of the Meiji Constitution were intended as impediments to deviant officials, not protections from the tyranny of the majority. They began from the premise of imperial authoritarianism rather than popular sovereignty, and proceeded along a course of difference rather than convergence. The disciplining of authority nonetheless demanded a robust public sphere. As Yoshino Sakuzō suggested, public vigilance was the source of light in the dark rooms of power; for if democracy required public engagement, all the more did authoritarianism.

Engagement continued to take the form of agitation against grievance—in strikes, union protests, even in mass riots and marches—and, with mounting attention, in favor of popular welfare. Engagement took the form, too, of routine electoral politics and exacting commentary from an enormous daily press on all acts of government.[39] The governing process itself remained under scrutiny, as critics fought the privileges of the peers, insisted on examination for all appointive posts, denounced clique-ridden ministries, and demanded party cabinets. And one of the most vigorous sites of criticism remained the academy. Both the training ground of public men and the cathedral of a

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national religion of education, the university long enjoyed an independence that made legal faculties the center of innovative theory. It was at Tokyo Imperial University that the jurist Minobe Tatsukichi refined a notion ascendant among liberals until the Pacific War: sovereignty resides in the legal person of the state, of which the emperor is an organ.[40] Although Minobe himself was no democrat, this deflection of sovereignty from the person of the monarch (and an implicit elevation of the Diet) might have prepared a far deeper ideological movement toward popular rule. Any such incipient movement died with the purges of academe and officialdom begun in 1935. But to regard it as inevitable, or even in healthy gestation, is to ignore the revolutionary distance that separates the sovereignty of the state from the sovereignty of the people. Revolution may have been on the way, though in a hypothetical history.

In the history we can recover, a statist ideology was pervasive. Yet this was not, for most, a triumphalist ideology. Certainly it was not one impervious to a public sphere where the state remained intently under scrutiny.

ENDNOTES

[1]For example, Tadashi Fukutake, *The Japanese Social Structure*, trans. Ronald P. Dore (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1982). Also see Karel van Wolferen, *The Enigma of Japanese Power* (New York: Alfred J. Knopf, 1989).

[2]For example, Edwin O. Reischauer, *The Japanese Today* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1977). For a recent work, see Sally A. Hastings, *Neighborhood and Nation in Tokyo*, 1905–1937 (Pittsburgh, Pa.: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1995).

[3]For example, Mikiso Hane, *Peasants, Rebels, and Outcastes* (New York: Pantheon, 1982) and *Reflections on the Way to the Gallows* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988); also, Miriam Silverberg, *Changing Song: The Marxist Manifestos of Nakano Shigeharu* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990).

[4]See Stephen Vlastos, "Opposition Movements in Early Meiji, 1868–1885," in *The Cambridge History of Japan*, vol. 5, ed. Marius B. Jansen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), esp. 426, for a thoughtful and wide-ranging analysis of state concessions to propertied interests. Vlastos breaks the bounds of any simple "materialist" analysis even while illuminating its most trenchant claims.

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[5]Most eminently, Andrew Barshay, *State and Intellectual in Modern Japan: The Public Man in Crisis* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988).

[6]See, for example, Maruyama Masao, *Sengo Nihon no kakushin shisō* (Tokyo: Gendai no Rironsha, 1983) and Andrew Barshay's discussion in "On (No) Revolution: Modalities of Historical Change in the Thought of Maruyama Masao," unpublished paper. Also see Carol Gluck, "The Past in the Present," in *Postwar Japan as History*, ed. Andrew Gordon (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993).

[7]A partial but extensive translation of Yoshino's great work, "On the Meanings of Constitutional Government and the Methods by Which It Can Be Perfected," appears in vol. 2 of *Sources of Japanese Tradition*, ed. Ryusaku Tsunoda et al. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), 217–239.

[8]John W. Hall, "Rule by Status in Tokugawa Japan," in *Journal of Japanese Studies* 1 (1) (1974); Herman Ooms, *Tokugawa Ideology: Early Constructs, 1570–1680* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1985); Sasaki Junnosuke, "Kōgi to mibun-sei," in *Taikei Nihon kokka-shi: Kinsei*, ed. Sasaki et al. (Tokyo: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppan-kai, 1975)

[9]Irwin Scheiner, "Benevolent Lords and Honorable Peasants," in *Japanese Thought in the Tokugawa Period*, ed. Tetsuo Najita and Scheiner (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978). Also see, in the same volume, Matsumoto Sannosuke, "The Idea of Heaven: A Tokugawa Foundation for Natural Rights Theory."

[10]The only synoptic work in English on the samurai is Eiko Ikegami, *The Taming of the Samurai: Honorific Individualism and the Making of Modern Japan* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995).

[11]For the urban situation, see Wakita Osamu, "Kinsei toshi no kensetsu to gōshō," in *Iwanami kōza Nihon no rekishi*, vol. 9 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1975); *Kyōto no rekishi*, vol. 5, comp. Kyōto-shi (Tokyo: Gakugei Shorin, 1972), 56–82; and William B. Hauser, *Economic Institutional Change in Tokugawa Japan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974). For the agrarian situation, see Furushima Toshi, "The Village and Agriculture During the Tokugawa Period," in *The Cambridge History of Japan*, vol. 4, ed. John W. Hall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), esp. 486–492.

[12]For analysis of conflict within villages see Herman Ooms, *Tokugawa Village Practice: Class, Status, Power* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996). For extra-village protest, see James White, *Ikki: Social Conflict and Political Protest in Early Modern Japan* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1995); Anne Walthall, *Social Protest and Popular Culture in Eighteenth-Century Japan* (Tucson, Ariz.: University of Arizona Press, 1986); and Stephen Vlastos, *Peasant Protests and Uprisings in Tokugawa Japan* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1986). For petitions, see Luke Roberts, "The Petition Box in Eighteenth-Century Tosa," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 20 (2) (1994).

[13]Thomas C. Smith, "The Land Tax in the Tokugawa Period," in *Studies in the Institutional History of Early Modern Japan*, ed. John W. Hall and Marius B. Jansen (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1968). Ogyū Sorai was

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one of the earlier and most vociferous advocates of returning samurai to the land. See J. R. McEwan, *The Political Writings of Ogyū Sorai* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962).

[14]The most elaborate treatment of the samurai "tradition" came from Yamaga Sokō, who compiled a systematic encyclopedia of martial society in 58 volumes. See the *Buke jiki*, ed. Yamaga Sokō Sensei Zenshū Kankō-kai, 3 vols. (Tokyo: Nisshin Insatsu Kabushiki Gaisha, 1915).

[15]Quoted in Tsunoda, *Sources of Japanese Tradition*, vol. 1, 347.

[16]Ronald P. Dore, *Education in Tokugawa Japan* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1965); and Richard Rubinger, *Private Academies of Tokugawa Japan* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1982).

[17]Extracts from the work of these thinkers appear in Tsunoda, *Sources of Japanese Tradition*, vol. 1. See 379 for the Banzan quotation, 491 for the Seiryō quotation.

[18]Thomas C. Smith, "'Merit' as Ideology in the Tokugawa Period," in *Native Sources of Japanese Industrialization*, 1750–1920 (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988), 169.

[19]Chikuzan's work is discussed at length by Tetsuo Najita in *Visions of Virtue in Tokugawa Japan: The Kaitokudō Merchant Academy of Osaka* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 151–186. The quotations, which are Najita's paraphrases of Chikuzan, are on 168.

[20]Barshay, in discussions of imperial Japan in the prewar period, defines public men inside and outside of government and then explores their histories through exemplary biographies. See Barshay, *State and Intellectual in Modern Japan*.

[21]Najita, *Visions of Virtue*, 222–284.

[22]For a splendid overview, see E. Sydney Crawcour, "Economic Change in the Nineteenth Century," in *The Cambridge History of Japan*, vol. 5.

[23]Mitsui Takahira, "Kanai shikihō chō" (1695/2) in *Mitsui-ke jigyō shiryō*. The classic study in English of merchant thought, and its resonance with a "Protestant ethic," is Robert N. Bellah, *Tokugawa Religion: The Values of Pre-Industrial Japan*, 2d ed. (New York: The Free Press, 1985).

[24]For censorship, see Munemasa Isoo, *Kinsei Kyōto shuppan bunka no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Dōmei-sha, 1982), 54–56. For Tokugawa-period publishers' catalogues, where titles can be searched, see the following note. Also see *Edo Printed Books at Berkeley*, comp. Oka Masahiko et al. (Tokyo: Yumani Shobō, 1990) for a convenient and substantial (though partial) list of the material that reached the public.

[25]For a splendid treatment of Tokugawa-period printing, see Henry D. Smith II, "The History of the Book in Edo and Paris," in *Edo and Paris: Urban Life and the State in the Early Modern Era*, ed. James L. McClain et al. (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1994). Also see Donald H. Shively, "Popular Culture," in *The Cambridge History of Japan*, vol. 4. The book catalogues are reproduced in *(Edo jidai) Shorin shuppan shoseki mokuroku shūsei*, ed. Shidō Bunko, 4 vols. (Tokyo: Inoue Shobō, 1962–1964).

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[26]Among the most remarkable city directories are the *Edo sōkanoko meisho taizen* in *Edo sōsho,* ed. Edo Sōsho Kankō-kai (Tokyo: Edo Sōsho Kankō-kai, 1916), vols. 3–4, and the *Kyō habutae* in *(Shinshū) Kyōto sōsho* (Kyoto: Rinsen Shoten, 1976).

[27]Fujimoto Kazan, *Shikidō ōkagami,* in *Kinsei shikidō-ron* (vol. 60 of *Nihon shisō taikei*), ed. Noma Kōshin (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1976). The prolific literature of primers and texts is surveyed in Ishikawa Matsutarō, *Ōraimono no seiritsu to tenkai* (Tokyo: Yūshōdō Shuppan, 1988).

[28]Thomas C. Smith, "Okura Nagatsune and the Technologists," in *Native Sources*, 173–198; and Smith, *The Agrarian Origins of Modern Japan* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1959). The most influential of the manuals was Miyazaki Antei's *Nōgyo zensho*; see *Kinsei kagaku shisō*, vol. 1, comp. Furushima Toshio (vol. 62 of *Nihon shisō taikei*) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1972).

[29]Matsumoto Sannosuke, "The Roots of Political Disillusionment: 'Public' and 'Private' in Japan," in *Authority and the Individual in Japan*, ed. Victor Koschmann (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1974); and H. D. Harootunian, "Late Tokugawa Culture and Thought," *The Cambridge History of Japan*, vol. 5, 178–179.

[30]The fiction of Ihara Saikaku provides an encyclopedic view of these subjects. See, for example, *The Japanese Family Storehouse*, trans. G. W. Sargent (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959); and *The Life of an Amorous Woman*, trans. Ivan Morris (New York: New Directions, 1963).

[31]See Maruyama Masao's discussion of Motoori Norinaga in *Studies in the Intellectual History of Tokugawa Japan*, trans. Mikiso Hane (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1974), 135–176, 264–273. Also see J. Victor Koschmann, "The Debate on Subjectivity in Postwar Japan," in *Pacific Affairs* 54 (4) (1982).

[32]Vlastos, "Opposition Movements in Early Meiji," and Andrew Gordon, *Labor and Imperial Democracy in Prewar Japan* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991).

[33]See F. G. Notehelfer's review of James C. Baxter, *The Meiji Unification through the Lens of Ishikawa Prefecture*, in *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 57 (1) (1997): 270–289.

[34]A small peerage, which did not become a major source of national leadership, was retained in the Meiji Constitution. The upper house of the Diet was to be "composed of members of the Imperial Family, of Nobles, and of Deputies who have been appointed by the Emperor."

[35]See Irokawa Daikichi, *The Culture of the Meiji Period*, trans. Marius B. Jansen (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1985), 76–122 for discussion of the constitutions drafted even in remote villages.

[36]For an English translation of the constitution, see the *Kodansha Encyclopedia of Japan*, vol. 2 (Tokyo and New York: Kodansha, 1983), 7–9. For discussion by the oligarchs, see *Fifty Years of New Japan*, ed. Okuma Shigenobu (New York: Dutton, 1909).

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[37]For an excellent summary of constitutional constraints, see Taichirō Mitani, "The Establishment of Party Cabinets, 1898–1932," in *The Cambridge History of Japan*, vol. 6, ed. Peter Duus (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

[38]Robert M. Spalding, *Imperial Japan's Higher Civil Service Examinations* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1967); Ronald Dore, *The Diploma Disease* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1976); Earl Kinmonth, *The Self-Made Man in Japanese Thought* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1981); Maruyama Masao, "Kindai Nihon no chishikijin," in *Kōei no ichi kara* (Tokyo: Miraisha, 1982).

[39]Michael Lewis, *Rioters and Citizens: Mass Protest in Imperial Japan* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990); Gregory J. Kasza, *The State and the Mass Media in Japan, 1918–1945* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988).

[40]The fullest study of Minobe in English is Frank O. Miller, *Minobe Tatsukichi, Interpreter of Constitutionalism in Japan* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1965). Also see Byron K. Marshall, "Professors and Politics: The Meiji Academic Elite," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 3 (1) (1977).

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Japan is not, of course, inherently imitative; and its indigenous culture is a distinctive amalgam of native feudal institutions and Chinese literary, religious, and philosophical influences. But the most important thing about contemporary Japan is that it was, like Germany, a late developer. It was not one of the original beneficiaries of the Industrial Revolution, and industrialism in Japan owes nothing to the "invisible hand" of Adam Smith. Industrialization in Japan was introduced from above, for political and not economic reasons, in order to counter the threat of Western imperialism, and with genuine foreign models as the only true measures of success or failure. Japan's modern achievements are imitative in their results but not in their methods.

Japan is part of the Sinitic cultural area. Although its heritage of feudalism and rule by a military aristocracy distinguish it from traditional Chinese society, Japan and China today share three things in common. The ethics of both countries derive from Confucianism even though Confucianism as a formal institution no longer exists in either society; both countries were more or less closed to contacts with the outside world from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries; and both countries came under the direct, military impact of Western imperialism in the space of fifteen years—the Opium War of 1839–1842 for the Chinese and the arrival of the U.S. Navy in 1853–1854 for the Japanese. After that their histories diverge completely.

—Chalmers Johnson
"The People Who Invented the
Mechanical Nightingale"

from *Dædalus,* Summer 1990,
"Showa: The Japan of Hirohito"

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Frederic Wakeman, Jr.

Boundaries of the Public Sphere in Ming and Qing China

INTRODUCTION

OUR CONTEMPORARY DEBATES on whether or not a "public sphere" existed in late imperial China posit three different domains of elite political action and reaction.[1] The first, *guan*, was the arena of "official" or bureaucratic engagement, and thereby the most regulated of the three domains. *Guan* is usually translated as "an official, a mandarin; public."[2] The second zone, the licit realm of "public weal" affairs, was *gong*, translated as "public; open to all."[3] Both domains were open and aboveboard, at least seemingly. The third was not. Its very name, *si*, connotes self-interest illictly invading the public domain: "private, personal, selfish, partial, unfair; secret, contraband, underhand, illicit; the private procreational parts."[4]

Most historians have presented the rise of elite gentry "activism" in the late nineteenth century from the viewpoint of *gong*.[5] That is to say, they posit—together with the appearance of a new and rapidly fusing mercantile and gentry elite—the emergence of a public sphere manifested in new forms of philanthropy, in print capitalism and the new journalistic media of the treaty ports, in local public works, in chambers of commerce, in locally funded and organized public security organizations, in new educational institutions to transmit "Western learning," and in the reform clubs of the Generation of 1898.[6] Skeptics of this conception of *gong* as "public sphere" somewhat more cynically identify such "gentry activism" as a self-serving form of elite local entrenchment and engrossment of state power,

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which had been taking place ever since the propertied classes of China mounted the counterinsurgency against the Taiping Rebels during the great civil war of the 1850s and 1860s.[7] In that regard, "public" (*gong*) responsibilities and "private" (*si*) interests appear to be inextricably entangled and intentionally confused by communally spirited elites who were also demonstrably self-serving as the empire began to crumble under the onslaught of Western and Japanese imperialism.[8]

Rather than oppose "public" and "private," however, might we not recast the question of legitimate elite political activity in terms of the boundaries between "public" and "official," that is, between *gong* and *guan*—seen less as circles or spheres than as nested hierarchies whose domains were determined by relational social practice?[9] And might we not also gain a better sense of political legitimacy in late imperial China by devoting less attention to the appearance (or absence) of autonomous, norm-shaping institutions outside of government, giving greater consideration instead to activities along the ever-shifting boundary between "public" and "official" during several periods of literati political participation under the Ming and Qing dynasties (ca. 1570–1898)?[10]

The key questions to be raised, in that case, would concern the location of the boundaries of the political game and how the elasticity of those boundaries was affected by the intellectual reflexivity of the late Ming dynasty, by the increased political centralization that developed after the spectacular disorder of the Ming–Qing transition during the seventeenth century, by the amplified codification of bureaucratic sanctions and the institutionalization of imperial subjectivity in the High Qing, by the renascence of gentry political engagement that commenced after the White Lotus Rebellion (1796–1803) and culminated in the Reform Movement of 1898, and by the rise of a new sense of collective identity that presaged modern nationalism on the eve of the Revolution of 1911.[11]

LATE MING REFLEXIVITY

Since the introduction of Buddhism to China during the Han dynasty, there have been two preeminent periods of philosophi-

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cal activity: the eleventh and twelfth centuries, when the School of Principle (Lixue) was pulled together by Zhu Xi in what is now commonly described as a "neo-Confucian revival"; and the sixteenth century, when Wang Yangming (1472–1529) embodied the School of Mind (Xinxue) by locating "principle" within the self and by calling for both an intuitive reliance upon one's natural consciousness and a rejection of world-renouncing eremitism. Wang's doctrine of praxis ("knowing and doing are one") was a powerful call for action in this world—a call that later exerted considerable influence upon the *shishi* (men of resolve) who led the Meiji Restoration in Japan. In Wang's case, it reflected a life of action as a high Ming official engaged in dealing with the defiant minority tribesmen of the southwest (who were in the process of being absorbed by the Ming empire), and in suppressing the rebellion of a Ming prince who dared to challenge the imperial throne. For Wang's followers, who flourished during the century after his death, the doctrine of subjective praxis reflected an idealistic impulse to combat the corruption and scholasticism of their age with intuitive morality and populist fervor.[12]

In both aspects, the Wang Yangming school ran into difficulty. Wang's doctrines of natural intuitionism, based upon an innate sense of conscience that was "beyond good and evil," too easily lent itself to ungoverned excess—at least in the eyes of the school's critics.[13] For them, Li Zhi, a brilliant and iconoclastic late Ming philosopher who was accused of drug abuse and consorting with nuns, epitomized the "left wing" of the Wang school; Li died in jail for his sins, leaving a pall over the most expressive and affective of Wang's followers.[14]

He Xinyin, on the other hand, abided by Wang Yangming's dictum that "the streets are filled with sages." In a populist spirit that some historians have compared to qualities of the Protestant Reformation in Europe, He Xinyin advocated preaching to the masses. Simultaneously he organized new communitarian associations to replace traditional lineages, favoring sodalities over the conventional Confucian sib.[15] He, too, suffered at the hands of the authorities; but more importantly, like Li Zhi, he was rejected by the mainstream literati who preferred the ethi-

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cal formalism of Zhu Xi over the freer and more spontaneous morality of Wang Yangming.

Both Wang's followers and critics were influenced by the economic changes of their times. During the late 1500s and the early part of the seventeenth century, China was enriched by an enormous influx of silver from the mines of New Spain. At times, half of the silver mined at San Luis Potosí ended up in China, thanks to the Manila galleons that plied their way between Acapulco and the Philippines, where the specie was exchanged for Chinese silks and porcelains.[16] The availability of this new currency (eventually the "Carolus," the Mexican silver dollar identified by its portrait of Charles V, became the standard coin of China's burgeoning market towns) helped fuel the commercialization of China's coastal economy. During the boom years, which spanned the turn of the seventeenth century, prosperous regions such as Jiangnan (a hemisphere of about three hundred kilometers around present-day Shanghai) spawned merchants whose immense profits soon turned them into patrons for late Ming painters, an audience for a flourishing publishing industry, and sponsors of academies where both Wang Yangming's followers and their opponents established new arenas for philosophical and political discourse.[17]

THE RISE OF ACADEMIES

Private academies, founded and built to honor individual neo-Confucian philosophers while also bringing together like-minded scholars to study and fulfill the Way, had flourished in Song times (960–1278).[18] They thrived again during the late Ming period, thanks in part to the mercantile wealth generated by the economic boom of the Wanli years (1573–1619), and in part to the colony of eminent literati clustered along the lower reaches of the Yangtze River in Jiangnan.[19] Ostensibly devoted to philosophical contemplation, these academies also became centers of literati opposition to the eunuch-ridden politics of the Ming court. In 1572, the powerful Grand Secretary Zhang Juzheng had the emperor issue an order proscribing these centers of growing public political discourse, but they were revived no more than a decade later.[20] The most prominent of them, the

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Donglin Academy, took on the role of a kind of opposition party to the coalition of conservative grand secretaries and eunuch directors at court during the 1620s.[21] Speaking in the name of Confucian righteousness, Donglin academicians forsook philosophical aloofness in order to pose an engaged "loyalist" alternative to the increasingly vicious palace factionalism that prevailed in Beijing.[22]

The Donglin movement, which centered on the Yangtze cities of Suzhou and Wuxi, was crushed by the eunuchs and their allies in the North. Yet, as heroic paragons tortured to death by the Ming secret police, the Donglin martyrs survived in historical memory—not only for their progeny, who constituted the next generation of literati opponents to corrupt monarchic rule, but also for the reformers of the late nineteenth century and even the dissidents of the communist regime during the Cultural Revolution of the 1960s.[23]

The immediate successors to the Donglin, however, based themselves not so much on physical academies, tied to specific locales, as on networks of literati coteries connected by the civil-service examinations. The most important of these networks constituted the "Restoration Society" (Fushe). Ostensibly devoted to restoring the traditional ethical norms of Confucian "gentlemen" (*junzi*) by cleansing the court of corruption and factionalism, the leaders of the Fushe actually added considerably to their following as a result of their ability to guarantee a measure of success in passing the state examinations that conferred official gentry status and rewarded its successful candidates with high office.[24]

Consequently, the opposition by "clean" public-minded literati to the "dirty" world of corrupt officials was tarnished by the self-interested (*si*) careerism of the Restoration Society's most ardent political critics. This element of "selfishness" rendered the nascent public sphere of the late Ming era extraordinarily vulnerable to charges of factionalism and petty-mindedness, of being "mean men" (*xiaoren*) who were none the better than their opponents for banding together into "cabals and cliques" (*pengdang*). And, indeed, as the political struggles intensified during the dynasty's waning years, the "gentlemen" themselves allied with eunuchs, engaged in calumny, abandoned their ear-

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lier civility, and did nothing at all to change the rules of the game while the empire succumbed to peasant rebels within and Manchu invaders without.[25]

With the advent of the Manchus, however, the rules of late Ming politics were significantly altered. This is a well-known story, repeatedly told by nationalist reformers and revolutionaries in the twentieth century, and I will only briefly adumbrate it here. The public activities of the literati heroes of the Donglin and Fushe movements were looked upon with alarm by the new Qing rulers, who pointed out that the Ming empire had fallen so easily to them because of political factionalism at court and literati bickering in the cities of the South. As part of a process of appropriating the rich resources of Jiangnan, Qing rulers such as Dorgon (1612–1650) and the Shunzhi Emperor (r. 1644–1661) associated the tax evasion of the Yangtze delta gentry with the activities of the academies and political networks of Jiangsu and Zhejiang. Beginning in the late 1650s and culminating in the early 1660s, the Qing government cracked down on both simultaneously.[26] Tax evaders were arrested and thrown into jail, and the southern gentry who protested this loss of their privileges (including the threatened curtailment of all tax exemptions pertaining to their special status as state degreeholders) were told to cease using their academies as arenas for political discussion and elite activism. Penalties for infringement were severe, and by the late 1660s, the vigorous political movements that had begun more than half a century earlier were completely impeded. The academies were by then examination training centers, devoted to memorizing the Cheng-Zhu School of Principle texts that had, by imperial order, displaced the reflexivity of Wang Yangming's School of Mind. They were no longer forums for public discourse.[27]

This is not to say that the notion of a public space reserved for local elites to engage in political activity was utterly extirpated. Two of the most important thinkers of the Ming–Qing transition wrote privately, in works published later, about the importance of according local elites their due. Huang Zongxi advised Chinese (and perhaps even Manchu) emperors to permit the gentry to use local academies as an essential building block of the Confucian state.[28] There, public-spirited men of letters could

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come together not only for self-improvement but also to articulate their political views and assert their social consciences, with suggestions for improving the administration of the empire to be passed up the "pathway of words" (*yitiao yanlu*) to the monarch himself.[29]

Gu Yanwu, while decrying the meddling of the lower gentry in the local administration, argued that the centralized prefectural system should be invested with the "spirit of feudalism" on the grounds that local elites, looking after their own interests, were bound to come up with the best solutions to county- and prefecture-level problems.[30] This suggestion represented Gu's recognition that *gong* (public) and *si* (private) might find common ground in a doctrine of enlightened self-interest.[31] But Gu himself never became a *guan* (official) because he refused to serve the Qing out of loyalty to the Ming; and the tension between official service, public duty, and personal interest that was never resolved by him became a legacy for the Statecraft School that emerged very much under his influence during the nineteenth century.[32]

ESTABLISHING THE BOUNDARIES OF PERMISSIBLE POLITICAL ACTION: HIGH QING CENTRALIZATION AND LITERATI POLITICS, 1711–1730

The Kangxi Emperor (r. 1662–1722) won over the Chinese elite during the 1680s and 1690s. Compensating for the stringency and severity of the Oboi Regency (1662–1669), Kangxi surrounded himself with Chinese scholars, who were courted with affection and respect—up to a point. Public discourse was strictly not tolerated, but private and official converged in the literary intimacy of the emperor's Southern Studio and during the six imperial tours to the South between 1684 and 1707.

Relations between the emperor and his ministers soured during the succession crisis of 1711–1713, when Kangxi decided to disinherit his favorite son Yinreng. This political crisis, which resulted in deep factional divisions at court, severed the official-private domain shared through common aesthetic pursuits by the emperor and his ministers, reestablishing the boundary between *guan* and *si* that Kangxi had originally erased. With *gong* altogether denied and *si* curtailed, the world of the official

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became increasingly repressed and confined—shackled to the conformancy imposed by the civil-service examination system on the literate elite of the empire.[33]

This was evident in the notorious case of Dai Mingshi (1653–1713), a compiler of the emperor's Hanlin Academy, who was accused of sedition and imprisoned in 1711 for having written one of his students a letter that employed outlawed Ming reign titles.[34] In 1713 Dai and all of his kinsmen were sentenced to death. Kangxi mitigated the judgment by sparing Dai's kin (who were banished to exile in the far North), but Dai himself was executed.[35] At the time he wrote the letter, Dai Mingshi was pursuing a private scholarly project on the history of the loyalist Southern Ming dynasties, but after his death that personal realm of scholarly curiosity was off-limits for officials who had elected to serve the Qing dynasty.[36]

Imperial-ministerial relations only worsened with the accession of the Yongzheng Emperor (r. 1723–1735), who acquired the throne under suspicious circumstances and threw seven of his fourteen brothers into prison, where five died from maltreatment and neglect.[37] Yongzheng developed close personal associations with a few of his most trusted officials, such as Tian Wenjing, but his relationship with his regular bureaucrats was marked by suspicion and fear, and it was said that the emperor's spies were to be found throughout the empire, reporting on every official's public activities. In 1725 Yongzheng published a *Discourse on Parties and Cliques* (*Pengdang lun*), which sternly warned officials not to form factions within the government. While central power was increasingly consolidated under the emperor's personal command through the formation of a Grand Council, local administrative and ideological control was equally strengthened.[38] "Public" discourse became a matter of listening to local elders read copies of the emperor's *Sacred Edicts*, exhorting the populace to be submissive and compliant.[39]

During the late 1720s rumors were rife that Yongzheng had murdered his father, the Kangxi Emperor, in order to take the throne.[40] Believing that to be the case, a local schoolteacher in Hunan province named Zeng Jing (1679–1736), who had secretly contacted the offspring of the Ming loyalist philosopher Lü Liuliang in order to obtain some of his banned writings, tried

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in 1728 to incite a Qing general to lead a rebellion against the Yongzheng Emperor. The general, Yue Zhongqi (1686–1754), who was the most famous military commander of the period and a descendant of the Song loyalist Yue Fei, instantly informed a Manchu subordinate of the plot and exposed Zeng Jing to the emperor. Instead of ordering Zeng executed, Yongzheng used the opportunity of the putative rebellion to write a defense of his actions, refuting the charges that he had committed patricide and denouncing the Ming philosopher before the entire empire (every degreeholder was required to read the emperor's tract). Spared on the grounds that he had exposed Lü Liuliang's perfidy, Zeng Jing returned to his home province in 1731 as something of a hero. However, the moment Yongzheng died and the throne passed on, the new Qianlong Emperor (r. 1736–1796) had Zeng Jing killed by the "lingering death" (*lingqie*) of ten thousand slices, and almost all of the copies of the tract were seized and destroyed.[41]

The Zeng Jing case was a bizarre instance of the Yongzheng Emperor's determination to control not only the public sphere of discourse but also both official and private spheres of speculation and reflection on the monarchy's government. The rules of the political game now denied any room whatsoever for officials to position themselves between their bureaucratic performances (which the emperor "nourished" with a special allowance to prevent corruption) and their personal domain of scholarship and historical criticism.[42] For that moment in historical time, the public sphere—invisible to the naked eye—was in eclipse.

CENSORSHIP, CORRUPTION, COLLECTIVE UPRISINGS

Historians have left us with a paradoxical portrayal of the last half of the eighteenth century. A period of baroque splendor, when all roads seemed to lead to the lavish court of the Qianlong Emperor, the late 1700s have been described as a time of heightened imperial autocracy, extensive literary inquisitions, and growing intellectual conformity as the empire's literati were awed into a submissive clienthood before their grand dynastic patron, the longest-ruling monarch in all of Chinese history.[43] And there is much that rings true in this portrayal of an emperor who

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described himself as a sage while using the treasury surpluses and control system inherited from his father, the Yongzheng Emperor, to conquer large parts of Central Asia, amass a vast collection of paintings and books, and send his guardsmen and police into every cranny of the empire's core.[44]

Yet at the same time we learn that the compiling of the 36,000-volume imperial literary collection known as *The Complete Writings of the Four Treasuries* (*Siku quanshu*) was not just a form of literary inquisition.[45] It also may have provided the literati who engaged in the project with an opportunity to enshrine their own literary tastes and philosophical inclinations while at the same time setting the agenda for the styles of writing that would determine success in future state examinations.[46]

The inquisitors themselves, in other words, supposedly took their censorship as an opportunity to defend their independently determined version of the proper literary canon.[47] State ministers managed to hobble the Qianlong Emperor with bureaucratic routine, a mountain of paperwork, and a complex system of security classification that even kept some documents from the monarch's own gaze. In this depiction of Confucian routinization—which has been most brilliantly drawn by Philip A. Kuhn—the *ru* officialdom (*guan*) was a bulwark defending the public from the selfish (*si*) willfulness of the arch-despot, who may have intentionally conducted arbitrary purges and seemingly dysfunctional mass arrests in order to exercise the imperial volition.[48]

The paradox is easily resolved, however, if we realize that the realm of the private or *si* had been displaced or expropriated from the Confucian elite to the monarch proper.[49] Qianlong in effect possessed the empire and all that it contained: natural resources, peasants, cities, banner armies, cultural artifacts, tribal vassals, classical texts, philosophical canons, and the hearts and minds of the people.[50] He owned the Central Kingdom in a way that no absolutist European monarch possibly could.[51]

When Sir George Macartney arrived in 1793 to present his cousin King George III's respects from the greatest maritime monarch on earth to the world's greatest continental ruler, Qianlong balked. Much more aware of the threat of English naval power than had been heretofore realized, Qianlong re-

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jected George III's gesture of parity. Qianlong, after all, had everything to take and nothing to share.[52]

If the empire was the personal property of the emperor—his institutionalized subjectivity—then it could be disposed of as his coddled favorite, the former guardsman Heshen, wished. During the 1790s corruption spread throughout the higher bureaucracy. Heshen sold high offices for pearls the size of quail eggs; field marshals padded their military registers; provincial viceroys embezzled military supplies and hired their relatives at exorbitant salaries. *Si* in the illicit sense of personal gain flourished, and public spiritedness seemed to have vanished altogether. The emperor abdicated to his son, the Jiaqing Emperor (r. 1796–1820), but lived on as Heshen's protector for another three years, while White Lotus sectarians rose in massive rebellion in North and Central China.[53] When the old man finally passed away on February 7, 1799, Heshen became the scapegoat for Qianlong's arrogation. Out of respect for his own father, Jiaqing allowed Heshen to commit suicide, but his huge fortune was confiscated and his family's hereditary honors abrogated while Jiaqing set about the task of suppressing the White Lotus rebels and inaugurating well-meaning but ineffective reforms.[54]

THE RENASCENCE OF A LIMITED PUBLIC SPHERE AT THE TURN OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

The suppression of the White Lotus rebellion between 1796 and 1801 cost the imperial treasury one hundred million taels.[55] To those expenditures were added the expenses of repairing the Yellow River hydrology system, which flooded over its banks seventeen times during Jiaqing's reign. The emperor tried to cut costs wherever he could, and although in the end his measures merely angered those high officials who were still operating in the self-interested style of the Heshen years and who resented losing their kickbacks from inflated construction expenditures, his efforts did foster a fresh sense of public-mindedness to accompany the appearance of a new generation of young reformers who tried once again to bring *si*, *gong*, and *guan* together.[56]

The early 1800s saw the revival, in an informal and subdued way, of the kind of literati networks that had promoted reform

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and public-mindedness during the late Ming.[57] Unlike Ming academies and clubs, however, these networks did not preach the common good while practicing private factionalism. As described by James Polachek, the early nineteenth-century networks were connected by semiformal associations, often Beijing literary societies like the Xuannan Poetry Club (Xuannan shishe) or the Gu Tinglin [Yanwu] Shrine Association, whose members were mostly expectant officials awaiting appointment to the provinces or examination candidates hoping to pass the palace exams.[58] The societies usually had no formal location, and sometimes only met once or twice a year; but if Polachek is right, they constituted the core of groups of privately connected literati who called for reform in the name of public-mindedness while attaching themselves to officials who acted as their patrons.[59] That is, official "hosts" were vertically connected by private or personal ties to "guests" beneath them who pledged themselves to work together for the common good in a spirit of public dedication. This new alignment of *guan*, *si*, and *gong*, in short, was the incipience of the system of private secretaries and "tent friends" (*muyou*) who were to emerge as the personal staffs of the great self-strengthening and reformist viceroys who put down the Taiping Rebellion in the 1860s and implemented the Tongzhi Restoration after 1862.[60]

While their reform efforts centered on the Yellow River waterworks during the 1820s, these young scholar-officials also participated in the revival, again in a quiet and cautious way, of academies more like those earlier Ming institutions than the examination-oriented schools of the eighteenth century.[61] The best known of these was the Xuehaitang of Guangzhou, where the growing friction between the English and the Chinese over the opium trade caused many of the literati to concern themselves with the threat of foreign invasion.[62] It was these literati who constituted a group of advisors to Commissioner Lin Zexu before and after the outbreak of the Opium War (1839–1842), and they were the ones who later paid renewed attention to the seventeenth-century thinker Gu Yanwu, claiming him as one of the sources of inspiration for the school of statecraft (*jingshi*) that prevailed in the 1860s and 1870s.[63] It was also out of this group of "pure talk" (*qingyi*) critics of the

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court that there emerged some of the key formulators of New Text Confucianism, which eventually culminated in the utopian vision of Kang Youwei, leader of the Reform Movement at the end of the nineteenth century.[64]

THE LATE QING REFORM MOVEMENT AND THE PUTATIVE EMERGENCE OF A CHINESE PUBLIC SPHERE, 1890–1898

As "pure talk" flourished during the years just after the Sino-French War of 1884–1885, cries for reform began to spread from the treaty ports to the cities of the interior and even to the capital itself.[65] The treaty ports had spawned the beginning of a modern press, with newspapers like *Shenbao* (founded in 1870–1871 by Ernest Major, whose command of Chinese was extraordinary) creating in turn a new public opinion among the 20 to 35 percent of the male population that was functionally literate.[66] The treaty ports also provided examples of municipal activism, conducted at first by Westerners and then emulated by Chinese elites among merchants and gentry who had crowded into the foreign concessions at Shanghai after the Taiping Rebellion, swelling the city's population.[67]

Although the first writings calling for fundamental political reform (including the termination of the traditional examination system and the creation of a constitutional monarchy) originated among the Chinese in the treaty ports, the actual germination of the Reform Movement was fostered by examination licentiates with roots among the rural gentry. The genesis and development of this movement after the Chinese defeat by Japan in 1894–1895 has been described in considerable detail in the literature, and we will not tarry here other than to say that it spread in the provinces through self-strengthening societies and reform clubs that consciously hearkened back to the Donglin Movement of the late Ming.[68]

As a political phenomenon, the Reform Movement had at least two ideological sides: a utopian element, championed by Kang Youwei, who believed that the Guangxu Emperor (r. 1875–1907) had only to "turn his hand" for the empire to change from the top down; and a more pragmatic faction, led by the young literati of the provincial reform societies, who thought that change

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had to come from the bottom up by mobilizing "scholars of resolve" (*zhishi*) to sacrifice themselves for the nation.[69] In a certain sense, both threw the vertical integration of *guan-gong-si* out of kilter. For the utopians, the official realm of *guan* led by the emperor would simply effect reform at little expense to themselves. For the pragmatists, devoted to the commonweal of *gong* and the political struggle such devotion entailed, they would sacrifice their lives, which six of their leaders actually did. The private *si* component, meanwhile, was idealistically shelved, and the earlier hope of unifying the three forces, of integrating all three domains, faded.

In both cases, the result was momentary failure. Although the boundaries of the new Chinese public sphere had been forever enlarged by the "Hundred Days" of reform in 1898, embracing a new tradition of political engagement that would lead to the Revolution of 1911, political activists were temporarily restrained by the conservative countercoup of the Dowager Empress on September 22, 1898, and the ensuing Boxer Rebellion. A new sense of the "public" (*gong*) would be articulated by gentry and merchant leaders after 1901, but by then traditional literati politics had practically run its course and it was time to move on.[70] The next stage, not to be discussed in this essay, was the search for a new collective identity in racial nationalism, which led to the campaigns against the Manchu rulers of China, culminating in military mutinies, popular uprisings, and provincial secessions that eventually toppled the Qing dynasty in February 1912. That is, the incipient cultural construction of nationalism—Levenson's *Tianxia* or Meinecke's *Kulturnation*—gave way to a more elemental sense of racial identity that fueled the anti-Manchuism of the early 1900s.[71] The basis for this Chinese collective identity was a primordial code: the *minzu* or *Volk* who challenged imperial hierarchies and the universalistic culturalism of the Confucian literati in the name of a new egalitarian and particularistic nationalism.[72]

CONCLUSION: CIVILITY AND THE LIMITS OF CIVIL SOCIETY

The redrawing of the boundaries of literati political engagement from Ming to Qing left a dual legacy for twentieth-century

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Chinese intellectuals. The utopianism of the New Text School and Kang Youwei's reformers persisted, of course, in the anarchism of the May Fourth generation and eventually even in the Cultural Revolution of Chairman Mao. At the time—that is, during the first two decades of the twentieth century—sober-minded local gentry-merchant politicians tried to tame this utopianism by enlisting it in the service of provincial home rule, which possessed qualities of a "public sphere of a civil society kind," while never becoming a European replica. The legacy of that sort of tentative Chinese civil society—which had been passed down from late imperial literati struggling to reconcile the public, private, and official domains—was not strong enough to withstand the utopianism it failed to contain. Traditional civility was mistaken for class compromise, even in the republic of letters. And though bureaucrat, citizen, and bourgeois were functionally different in the great cities of China during the first half of the twentieth century, in the end the public and the private grew categorically confused.

Put somewhat differently, there were two different axes of variation between self-interest and the common good, with the latter being understood within the Confucian state patriarchy as both official ("the magistrate is father and mother to the people") and public ("all under heaven for the commonweal"). They intersected obliquely: on the one hand, the functional *guan-gong-si* differentiation; on the other, the normative public (also *gong*) and private (also *si*) distinction. Schematically, the three functional divisions—

guan	*gong*	*si*
bureaucratic	political	economic
(official/public)	(public/private)	

—were situated in contested zones. The statecraft scholars, for example, wished to link the political and the economic so that *si* was accepted as a legitimate part of *gong*. The bureaucratic establishment (including the emperor) took for granted the identification of the official with the political in the name of moral governance for the good of the people.

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This fusion on both sides led to a blurring of boundaries, the fuzziness of which made it difficult to imagine a genuine public sphere in a China where self and society remained relatively undifferentiated. What we take to be civil society is, after all, based upon the supposition that self-interest can be mediated through public or community interests, which create norms, laws, and procedures to buffer the "official" from the purely "*private.*" By treating *si* as illegitimate self-interest, orthodox Confucian rulers created a kind of ethical Prohibition, which in turn tolerated the formation of moral speakeasies for officials on the take. The boundaries of propriety were thereby preserved for centuries of imperial rule, but this sensible hierarchical hypocrisy was maintained by nesting each of the three spheres within the next—stifling public spirit and weakening civic expression. There is nothing "wrong" about this outcome, but it did, in a way, expose China to modern imperialism most vulnerably, leaving little more than a heightened collective identity and the folly of ideologically unmediated mass political movements to carry her through the middle years of this tumultuous century.

ENDNOTES

[1]Frederic Wakeman, Jr., "The Civil Society and Public Sphere Debate," *Modern China* 19 (2) (April 1993): 108–138. There is also a considerable literature in Chinese and Japanese on this issue, but in this essay I will intentionally confine my citations to Western language references. By "public sphere," I refer to the functional definition used by Rudolf G. Wagner: "That space between state and society . . . presented to public scrutiny in a bid by each side to convince and thus socially to enhance the argumentative power of its position." As Professor Wagner says, "This presupposes a minimal consensus in terms of values and of the rules validating an argument, but not that these values and rules be those of 18th-century European enlightenment." Rudolf G. Wagner, "The Role of the Foreign Community in the Chinese Public Sphere," *China Quarterly* 142 (June 1995): 427.

[2]William T. Rowe, "The Problem of 'Civil Society' in Late Imperial China," *Modern China* 19 (2) (April 1993): 139–157.

[3]Mary Backus Rankin, "Some Observations on a Chinese Public Sphere," *Modern China* 19 (2) (April 1993): 158–192 and "The Origins of the Chinese Public Sphere: Local Elites and Community Affairs in the Late Imperial Period," *Études Chinoises* 9 (2) (1990): 13–16.

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[4]The translations are all taken verbatim from Mathews' *Chinese-English Dictionary,* comp. R. H. Mathews (Shanghai: China Inland Mission, 1931; rev. American ed., Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1943).

[5]R. Bin Wong, "Great Expectations: The 'Public Sphere' and the Search for Modern Times in Chinese History," *Zhongguo shixue* (Studies in Chinese History) 3 (October 1993): 7–50.

[6]Mark Elvin, "The Gentry Democracy in Chinese Shanghai," in Jack Gray, ed., *Modern China's Search for a Political Form* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), pass.; Mary Backus Rankin, "'Public Opinion' and Political Power: *Qingyi* in Late Nineteenth-Century China," *Journal of Asian Studies* 41 (3) (May 1982): 453–483; Min Tu-ki, *National Polity and Local Power: The Transformation of Late Imperial China,* ed. Philip A. Kuhn and Timothy Brook (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989), 89–179; Lloyd Eastman, "Ch'ing-i and Chinese Policy Formation during the Sino-French Controversy, 1880–1885," *Journal of Asian Studies* 24 (4) (1965).

[7]Frederic Wakeman, Jr., *Strangers at the Gate: Social Disorder in South China, 1839–1860* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1966); Philip Kuhn, *Rebellion and Its Enemies in Late Imperial China: Militarization and Social Structure, 1796–1864* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1980); Muramatsu Yuji, "Landlord Bursaries," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 29 (1966).

[8]Daniel H. Bays, "The Nature of Provincial Political Authority in Late Ch'ing Times: Chang Chih-tung in Canton, 1884–1889," *Modern Asian Studies* 4 (4) (1970): 325–347; Kenneth Folsom, *Friends, Guests and Colleagues: The Mu-fu System in the Late Ch'ing Period* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1968).

[9]My debt to G. William Skinner for this notion of nestedness, along with the implication that boundaries open and close, hardly needs to be stated.

[10]This is one of the implicit points of Alan Wood's argument about the Song philosophers' use of the "imperial seminar" (*jingyan*), the "learning of the emperor" (*dixue*), and the Hall of Enlightenment (*Mingtang*) "to inculcate . . . in the ruler an understanding of the principles of natural law that were believed to unite heaven, earth and man." Wood believes that moral suasion acted as a restraint on arbitrary imperial authority that likened kingly rule in China to medieval European monarchy. Alan T. Wood, *Limits to Autocracy: From Sung Neo-Confucianism to a Doctrine of Political Rights* (Honolulu, Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press, 1995), 145.

[11]Some of these themes are adumbrated in Timothy Brook, ed., *The Asiatic Mode of Production in China* (Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 1989), 3–47, 118–148; William T. Rowe, "Approaches to Modern Chinese Social History," in Oliver Zunz, ed., *Reliving the Past: The Worlds of Social History* (New York: Harper & Rowe, 1985), 242–262; Frederic Wakeman, Jr., "Models of Historical Change: The Chinese State and Society, 1839–1989," in Kenneth Lieberthal, Joyce Kallgren, Roderick MacFarquhar, and Frederic Wakeman, Jr., eds., *Perspectives on Modern China: Four Anniversaries* (Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 1991), 68–102.

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[12]Julia Ching, *To Acquire Wisdom: The Way of Wang Yang-ming* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976).

[13]K. C. Hsiao, "Li Chih," *T'ien Hsia Monthly* 1 (1936): 317–341.

[14]Hok-lam Chan, *Li Chih (1527–1602) in Contemporary Chinese Historiography* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1980), 3–38, 87–99.

[15]Ronald G. Dimberg, *The Sage and Society: The Life and Thought of Ho Hsin-yin* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University of Michigan Press, 1974).

[16]S. A. M. Adshead, "The Seventeenth Century General Crisis in China," *Asian Profile* 1 (2) (October 1973): 271–280; William S. Atwell, "Notes on Silver, Foreign Trade, and the Late Ming Economy," *Ch'ing-shih wen-t'i* 3 (8) (December 1977): 1–33; Frederic Wakeman, Jr., "China and the Seventeenth Century World Crisis," *Late Imperial China* 7 (June 1986).

[17]Chun-shu Chang and Hsüeh-lun Chang, *Crisis and Transformation in Seventeenth Century China: Society, Culture, and the Modern in Lin Yü's World* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University of Michigan Press, 1992); Willard J. Peterson, *Bitter Gourd: Fang I-chih and the Impetus for Intellectual Change* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1979); Nelson I. Wu, "Tung Ch'i-ch'ang (1555–1636): Apathy in Government and Fervor in Art," in Denis Twitchett, ed., *Confucian Personalities* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1960), 260–293.

[18]For an interesting discussion of Song academies and "civil society"see Thomas H. C. Lee, "Academies: Official Sponsorship and Suppression," in Frederick P. Brandauer and Chün-chieh Huang, eds., *Imperial Rulership and Cultural Change in Traditional China* (Seattle, Wash.: University of Washington Press, 1994), 117–143.

[19]John Thomas Meskill, *Academies in Ming China: A Historical Essay* (Tuscon, Ariz.: University of Arizona Press, 1982).

[20]Ray Huang, *1587: A Year of No Significance* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1980).

[21]Charles O. Hucker, "The Tung-lin Movement of the Late Ming Period," in John K. Fairbank, ed., *Chinese Thought and Institutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), 132–163.

[22]Frederic Wakeman, Jr., "The Price of Autonomy: Intellectuals in Ming and Ch'ing Politics," *Dædalus* 101 (2) (Spring 1972): 35–70. "The confrontation they took was perfectly legitimate as this was the consummate form of Neo-Confucian political conviction, that is, absolute loyalty. I believe that in this sense the Neo-Confucian political philosophy was romanticist, and had a strong irrational element. Without that irrationality, there was no way that one could demand the educated elited to embrace the absolutist notion . . . and submit to an a priori belief that the monarch's personal rule could ultimately be moral." Lee, "Academies: Official Sponsorship and Suppression," 137.

[23]"The image of the Tung-lin partisans moved from one of a 'selfish' (*ssu*) political faction to that of a group of concerned literati whose aim was to address public (*kung*) needs of their time." Benjamin A. Elman, *Classicism, Politics,*

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and Kinship: The Ch'ang-chou School of New Text Confucianism in Late Imperial China (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1990), 276.

[24]The Restoration Society, through its connections with publishers who sold copies of successful examination essays, was able to set the style, so to speak, for the higher palace examinations. Candidates who mastered that style were also able, through the society's patrons, to gain access to the examiners themselves, who singled out individual members for selection as the "primus" (*zhuangyuan*) or "secundus" (*bangyan*) in the palace exams. The candidates' tests were tendered anonymously, but examiners could easily identify the candidate by his calligraphy—assuming they had met him before and come to recognize his hand. Frederic Wakeman, Jr., *The Great Enterprise: The Manchu Reconstruction of Imperial Order in Seventeenth-Century China* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1985), vol. 1. See also, for the early Qing, Adam Yuen-chung Lui, *The Hanlin Academy: Training Ground for the Ambitious, 1644–1850* (Hong Kong: Archon Books, 1981).

[25]Frederic Wakeman, Jr., "The Shun Interregnum," in Jonathan Spence and John Wills, eds., *From Ming to Ch'ing* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1976).

[26]William T. Rowe, "Education and Empire in Southwest China: Ch'en Hung-mou in Yunnnan, 1733–38," in Benjamin A. Elman and Alexander Woodside, eds., *Education and Society in Late Imperial China, 1600–1900* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1994), 417–457, especially 426–427.

[27]Jacques Gernet, "Clubs, cénacles et sociétés dans la Chine des XVIe et XVIIe siècles," 4e fasc. (Paris: Institut de France, 1986): 3–12.

[28]Alexander Woodside, "The Divorce between the Political Center and Educational Creativity in Late Imperial China," in Elman and Woodside, *Education and Society in Late Imperial China*, 458–492, especially 465–468.

[29]William Theodore de Bary, *Waiting for the Dawn: A Plan for the Prince* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993); Lynn A. Struve, "Huang Zongxi in Context: A Reappraisal of His Major Writings," *Journal of Asian Studies* 47 (3) (August 1988): 474–502.

[30]Willard J. Peterson, "The Life of Ku Yen-wu (1613–1682)," parts I and II, *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 28 (1968) and 29 (1969); Min Tu-ki, *National Polity and Local Power: The Transformation of Late Imperial China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1989), 92–97.

[31]Min Tu-ki, *National Polity and Local Power,* 88. "The *chün-hsien* system was attacked as *ssu* because it concentrated sovereignty in a single person, while the *feng-chien* system was supported as *kung* because sovereignty was shared by many." Ibid., 89–90.

[32]Frederic Wakeman, Jr., "Introduction," in Frederic Wakeman, Jr., and Carolyn Grant, eds., *Conflict and Control in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1975). But see the interesting analysis of Phillip C. C. Huang, "Between Informal Mediation and Formal Adjudication:

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The Third Realm of Qing Civil Justice," *Modern China* 19 (3) (July 1993): 251–298.

[33]Paul S. Ropp, *Dissent in Early Modern China: Ju-lin wai-shih and Ch'ing Social Criticism* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University of Michigan Press, 1981).

[34]Pierre-Henri Durand, *Lettrés et pouvoirs: un procès litteraire dans la Chine impériale* (Paris: Editions de l'Ecole des hautes etudes en sciences sociales, 1992).

[35]Lucien Mao, "Tai Ming-shih," *T'ien Hsia Monthly* 5 (4): 382–399.

[36]Arthur W. Hummel, ed., *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period (1644–1912)* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1944), 2: 701.

[37]Silas H. L. Wu, *Passage to Power: K'ang-hsi and His Heir-Apparent, 1661–1722* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1979).

[38]Beatrice S. Bartlett, *Monarchs and Ministers: The Grand Council in Mid-Ch'ing China, 1723–1820* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1991); Pei Huang, *Autocracy at Work: A Study of the Yung-cheng Period, 1723–1725* (Bloomington, Ind.: University of Indiana Press, 1974).

[39]Timothy Brook, "Censorship in Eighteenth-Century China: A View from the Book Trade," *Canadian Journal of History* (August 1988): 177–196.

[40]Tom S. Fisher, "New Light on the Accession of the Yung-cheng Emperor," *Papers on Far Eastern History* 17 (March 1978): 103–136.

[41]There is a copy of the tract, the *Dayi juemi lu*, in the Library of Congress.

[42]Madeleine Zelin, *The Magistrate's Tael: Rationalizing Fiscal Reform in 18th-Century Ch'ing China* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1984).

[43]James Cahill, "The Orthodox Movement in Early Ch'ing Painting," in Christian F. Murck, *Artist and Tradition: Uses of the Past in Chinese Culture* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1976), 169–181; L. Carrington Goodrich, *The Literary Inquisition of Ch'ien-lung* (Baltimore, Md.: Waverly Press, 1935); Harold L. Kahn, *Monarchy in the Emperor's Eyes: Image and Reality in the Ch'ien-lung Reign* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971); Frederic Wakeman, Jr., "High Ch'ing, 1683–1839," in James B. Crowley, ed., *Modern East Asia: Essays in Interpretation* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1970), 1–28.

[44]Alison Dray-Novey, "Spatial Order and Police in Imperial Beijing," *Journal of Asian Studies* 52 (4) (November 1993): 885–922.

[45]R. Kent Guy, *The Emperor's Four Treasuries: Scholars and the State in the Late Ch'ien-lung Era* (Cambridge, Mass.: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1987).

[46]One of the compilers, the polymath Dai Zhen (1724–1777), developed a powerful critique of the School of Principle as a buttress of arbitrary and despotic authority in his treatises *Yuanshan* and *Mengzi ziyi shuzheng*. See the dissertation on the latter by John Woodruff Ewell, "Re-inventing the Way: Dai Zhen's Evidential Commentary on the Meanings of Terms in Mencius (1777)," Ph.D. thesis, Berkeley, Calif., 1990.

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[47]But see the discussion of Zhuang Cunyu in Benjamin Elman, *Classicism, Politics, and Kinship: The Ch'ang-chou School of New Text Confucianism in Late-Imperial China* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1990).

[48]Philip A. Kuhn, *Soulstealers: The Chinese Sorcery Scare of 1768* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990), 218–219. For the charismatic glorification of the emperor, see ibid., 10–11.

[49]In this regard see the tragically reflective remarks of Chün-chieh Huang in the essay "Some Observations and Reflections," in Frederick P. Brandauer and Chün-chieh Huang, eds., *Imperial Rulership and Cultural Change in Traditional China* (Seattle, Wash.: University of Washington Press, 1994), especially 285.

[50]Kahn, *Monarchy in the Emperor's Eyes*, 10–11.

[51]By defining the domain of all accepted social practices, Qianlong's regime—based upon pervasive control systems such as the *baojia* mutual responsibility system—was in many ways more interventionist than the "absolutist Polizeystaat, a state governed by princely ordinances or policies that could in principle apply to any domain of societal activity." Wolfgang Schluchter and S. N. Eisenstadt, "Introduction," *Dædalus* 127 (3) (Summer 1998): 10. See also Perry Anderson, *Lineages of the Absolutist State* (London: Verso Editions, 1979), especially 15–42.

[52]Alain Peyrefitte, *The Immobile Empire*, trans. Jon Rothschild (New York: Knopf, 1992).

[53]Blaine Gaustad, "The White Lotus Rebellion in the Han River Highlands," Ph.D. thesis, Berkeley, Calif., 1992.

[54]David Nivison, "Ho-shen and His Accusers: Ideology and Political Behavior in the 18th Century," in David Nivison, ed., *Confucianism in Action* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1959), 209–243.

[55]A tael was roughly equivalent to one ounce of silver.

[56]A. E. Grantham, *Manchu Monarch: An Interpretation of Chia-ch'ing* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1935); Susan Mann Jones and Philip A. Kuhn, "Dynastic Decline and the Roots of Rebellion," in John K. Fairbank, ed., *Cambridge History of China*, vol. 10 (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 107–162; Susan Mann Jones, "Scholasticism and Politics in Late Eighteenth-Century China," *Ch'ing-shih wen-t'i* 3 (2) (December 1975): 11–33.

[57]But see also the discussion of the Imperial College in Woodside, "The Divorce between the Political Center and Educational Creativity in Late Imperial China," 475–480.

[58]James Montel Polachek, "Literati Groups in Literati Politics in Early Nineteenth Century China," Ph.D. thesis, Berkeley, Calif., 1976. "Probably more important as a formative influence bearing on the texture of nineteenth-century examination-elite culture, however, was the boost given the ideal of aesthetic fellowship as a result of the expansion of the role of verse composition in the imperial examinations during the mid-eighteenth century. . . . Verse writing itself had not played a major role in the examination system of the late

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imperial era until the Ch'ien-lung emperor chose to reintroduce it into the examinations through a series of changes undertaken between 1751 and 1760. . . . Personal convergence and intimacy henceforth would tend to find their ultimate expression in the sentimentality or lyricism of poetry, and not in the didacticism of prose expression." James M. Polachek, *The Inner Opium War* (Cambridge, Mass.: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1992), 26–27, 39–59.

[59]Note Polachek's comments on examination influence via the Spring Purification Meetings held in 1829, 1832, and 1836. Polachek, *Inner Opium War,* 76–77.

[60]Folsom, *Friends, Guests and Colleagues*; Jonathan Porter, *Tseng Kuo-fan's Private Bureaucracy* (Berkeley, Calif.: Center for Chinese Studies, 1972).

[61]See the relevant articles in Elman and Woodside, *Education and Society in Late Imperial China.*

[62]Jane Kate Leonard, *Wei Yuan and China's Rediscovery of the Maritime World* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984); Woodside, "The Divorce between the Political Center and Educational Creativity in Late Imperial China," 481–482.

[63]Chang Hao, "On the Ching-shih Ideal in Neo-Confucianism," *Ch'ing-shih wen-t'i* 3 (1) (November 1974): 36–61.

[64]Elman, *Classicism, Politics, and Kinship*; Frederic Wakeman, Jr., *History and Will: Philosophical Perspectives of Mao Tse-tung's Thought* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1973). For *qingyi*, see Elman, *Classicism, Politics, and Kinship,* 282–290; Lloyd Eastman, "Ch'ing-i and Chinese Policy Formation during the Sino-French Controversy, 1880–1885," *Journal of Asian Studies* 24 (4) (1965); and Rankin, "'Public Opinion' and Political Power."

[65]Lloyd Eastman, "Political Reformism in China before the Sino-Japanese War," *Journal of Asian Studies* 27 (4) (August 1968): 695–710; Mary Backus Rankin, "'Public Opinion' and Political Power: Qingyi in Late Nineteenth-Century China," *Journal of Asian Studies* 41 (3) (May 1982): 453–483.

[66]David Johnson, Andrew J. Nathan, and Evelyn S. Rawski, eds., *Popular Culture in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1985), 360–395. In this regard see Professor Wagner's interesting comments on Major's role as an initiator of the Chinese "public sphere" in Wagner, "The Foreign Community in the Chinese Public Sphere," 432–440.

[67]Elvin, "The Gentry Democracy in Chinese Shanghai."

[68]Wakeman, "The Price of Autonomy."

[69]K. C. Hsiao, *A Modern China and a New World: K'ang Yu-wei, Reformer and Utopian, 1858–1927* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1975).

[70]Mary Backus Rankin, *Elite Activism and Political Transformation in China: Zhejiang Province, 1865–1911* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1986).

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[71]Joseph Richmond Levenson, *Confucian China and Its Modern Fate* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1958–1965); Friedrich Meinecke, *Cosmopolitanism and the National State*, trans. Robert Kimber (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1970); Hans Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism* (New York: Collier Books, 1967). The analogy with German nationalism is quite suggestive. "The German identity started as such a cultural construction. Its architects were not kings, princes or politicians but intellectuals—writers, philosophers or other members of the Bildungsbürgertum, i.e., an educational class comprising also higher state officials, lawyers, professors, engineers, or army officers." Shmuel Noah Eisenstadt and Bernhard Giesen, "The Construction of Collective Identity," *Archives Europeenes de Sociologie* 36 (1) (1995): 72–102.

[72]Eisenstadt and Giesen, "The Construction of Collective Identity," 79.

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To the extent that the word "rationalism" refers to the primacy of the idea of order, we can already speak here of the emergence of a kind of Chinese rationalism. It is, however, a rationalism that is radically different from many varieties of rationalism in ancient Greece. What we have is the image of an all-embracing and inclusive order which neither negates nor reduces to some one ultimate principle that which is presumed to exist. Like the rationalism of bureaucracy, it classifies and subsumes the existent reality. It is a synthetic rather than an analytic conception of order. The spirits of nature and the ancestral spirits are not banished. Indeed, Chinese thought has never seriously attempted to carry out the "disenchantment" of the world. The gods of mountains and winds, the presiding deities of the constellations and of the earth, are ever present, but they never seem to achieve the kind of many-sided anthropomorphization that liberates nature deities elsewhere from their primary functions. The person is absorbed by the functionary and his role is fixed in the large cosmic order. The Chinese gods and ancestral spirits—at least within the high culture—are in striking contrast to the unruly and unpredictable individuals on the Mesopotamian Council of the Gods or on Mount Olympus. To the extent that they are confined to their functions there are no stories to tell about them, and they have no mythic existence. In contrast, in the *Enuma Elish,* one has the impression that whatever cosmic order is achieved among the gods is based on a kind of precarious compact among them.

—Benjamin I. Schwartz
"Transcendence in Ancient China"

from *Dædalus,* Spring 1975,
"Wisdom, Revelation, and Doubt:
Perspectives on the First Millennium B.C."

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Alexander Woodside

Territorial Order and Collective-Identity Tensions in Confucian Asia: China, Vietnam, Korea

WRITING IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY, the great European essayist Montaigne called attention to the rich suggestiveness of Plutarch's remark that the people of Asia were subject to despotism because they did not "know how to pronounce the single syllable, No."[1] The best-selling books that have appeared in contemporary Asian countries four centuries later, with titles such as *A Japan That Can Say No* (by Shintaro Ishihara and Akio Morita), *An Asia That Can Say No* (by Shintaro Ishihara and Mahathir Mohamad), or *A China That Can Say No* (by Song Qiang and other Chinese journalists), are obvious postcolonial responses to a long Western tradition of dismissing premodern Asian political orders. But it is not just the musty theme of "Oriental despotism" that is in question. Asian thinkers want to say "no" to Western constructions of historical time, hoping to find in the process a more ecumenical scheme of human evolution that does not disempower them.

The search for such a scheme, as it relates to the "modernity" or potential for modernity of non-Western political orders and collective identities, involves more than armchair-bound professors, at least outside the West. The command of time, and of the definition of time, can be as significant a part of the development of power as the command of space or money; in eastern Asia, historical modernization timetables, as manipulated by elite figures, have practically become the substitutes for reli-

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gious prophecies. An eminent Chinese economist, for example, told a gathering of Chinese futurologists in 1994 that China was in the middle of the third of four historical cycles of change (1919–1948, 1949–1978, 1979–2008, 2009–2038) and might be expected to have a "new constitution" by the year 2008; but the perfection of Chinese social reforms would not be within reach until the end of the fourth cycle.[2] It has been less easy for Chinese intellectuals to locate China's position in the common evolutionary past, although for reasons of self-empowerment this has been an obsession. In 1937, the philosopher Liang Shuming argued that Chinese civilization could be called both "senescent" and "juvenile" but that it had never been properly "medieval" in the Western sense. Really, the problem was that it was outside historical time, as Western thinkers defined it.[3]

Of course, the Chinese have been just as ready to plunder Western historical development for their own purposes, by telescoping it and imposing a typological timelessness on it. For example, an important 1987 Chinese history of Western management thought lumps the Pharaohs of ancient Egypt ("Western" management theorists for this book's purposes) in with twentieth-century American behavioral scientists such as Herbert Simon and B. F. Skinner.[4] But the book in which Liang Shuming complained about China's ambiguous relationship to Western chronologies of historical evolution was not a general philosophical treatise; it was a guide to Chinese rural reconstruction. To imagine a Western equivalent of such a text, one would have to think of something like a handbook about the Tennessee Valley Authority as written by Oswald Spengler. What is remarkable is the comprehensiveness with which Asian thinkers link their countries' positions on some imagined evolutionary scale to such mundane and technical matters as rural credit problems and village organizational difficulties. Not having been colonized, Western modernization theorists do not have the same need to acquire a faith in their own postcolonial history-making powers.

All this makes extraordinarily timely the call by S. N. Eisenstadt and Luis Roniger to get beyond "the European metropolitan model" of political order and tease out the "different patterns of modernity" that have undoubtedly existed.[5] Such an effort

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may inevitably be part of a global contestation over the making of historical meaning, as suggested above, but it is also justified intellectually. The belief in something called "modernity" is now universal. The search for the roots of multiple modernities outside the West will inevitably defamiliarize the notion for Western audiences, challenging its premature transparency. This is in keeping with the more general defamiliarization aspirations of Western postmodernist historians—most of whom still ignore Asian history.[6]

Indeed, "modernity" could jokingly be called one of the world's earliest postmodernist metaphors. The term was first applied in Europe in the ninth century to the reign of Charlemagne, a Western ruler whose command of resources and administrative sophistication were utterly inferior to the Chinese emperors who ruled at the same time.[7] But its constructions have always been provisional and contested, except in such things as the global development reports of the World Bank (which awarded China seventy-third place on its 1995 pseudocanonical scale of national modernities). And the term's meanings have shifted many times in the eleven centuries since Charlemagne. The slow revision of the Eurocentrism that this term possessed during its Western colonial heyday is at present one of the best ways to rescue the non-West from the limbo of historical timelessness in which it has been made to exist, with disempowering consequences for everybody.

The non-Western political orders whose relationships to world history, as we see it now, most deserve hard thinking are the three Confucian monarchies of China, Vietnam, and Korea. Of course, the term "Confucian monarchies" hardly conveys the breadth of the civilization that these countries shared. Both Korea and Vietnam were colonies of early medieval China, from which they subsequently broke away, and both continued to be influenced by what one might call the Chinese Han dynasty's imperial ideal. (Vietnamese newspapers still occasionally refer to Hanoi as Trang An, that is, Changan, the name of the old capital of medieval China.) Koreans and Vietnamese got more than Confucianism from China. They imported and indigenized Taoism and such Chinese forms of Mahayana Buddhism as Zen, and they used Chinese writing, supplemented by

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indigenous writing systems of their own. However, although we have a rough functionalist sense of Chinese state institutions, we still know less than we should about the strategic conversations within the system concerning state power and how it should be exercised or reformed. A comparison of the three political orders is even more hazardous. We do not yet fully grasp all the basic differences in their inner mental lives. The imaginative Vietnameseness or Koreanness of even such simple classical archetypes as the Confucian "gentleman" remains to be fully charted. Just as the Christian Bible might resonate differently in the minds of Scottish Calvinists, German Lutherans, or Polish Catholics, so too could such texts as the Confucian *Analects* be read differently by Chinese or Korean academicians or Vietnamese village teachers. What follows can only be considered preliminary hypotheses about the history these three monarchies had in common.

COLLECTIVE IDENTITY CREATION AND CIVIL RELIGIONS

Chronic religious warfare in Europe—and its relative absence in China, Korea, and Vietnam—gives us as good a starting point as any for the study of the global formation of political orders in the past thousand years. Eurocentrism may compel us to ask why China and its two smaller neighbors failed to achieve adequate civil societies. But Sinocentrism compels us to ask why a priest-ridden Europe failed to achieve an adequate civil religion for so many centuries. There were no Huguenot wars in Confucian Asia. And although there were occasional ugly government repressions of Buddhism—as in ninth-century China or fifteenth-century Korea—there were still no large-scale holy wars, religious inquisitions, extensive public burnings of heretics, or St. Bartholomew massacres in Chinese, Vietnamese, or Korean history.

In this one respect it could be argued that these Confucian monarchies were the most advanced polities in the world before the Western Enlightenment, for they had achieved the basis of what many of the most modern of the West's pre-Enlightenment thinkers had wanted for Europe. As Mark Goldie has argued, "civil religion" was one of the "most pervasive political lan-

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guages of early modern Europe," particularly for seventeenth-century theorists like Hobbes, Locke, and Harrington.[8] The ideal monarch proposed by Thomas Hobbes (in his *Leviathan*) as the solution to the European crisis of the seventeenth century—an exemplary Christian king who would unite both civil and ecclesiastical powers in his own person and become both "civil sovereign" of his people and their "supreme pastor" as well[9]—bore a strong unintended resemblance to the actual "Caesaropapist" rulers of China, Korea, and Vietnam at the time Hobbes wrote. And the Confucian monarchs' realization of the Hobbesian ideal of the unity of civil and religious powers was at least effective enough to have avoided the worst religion-driven disorders that plagued European politics. It also avoided order-preserving methods that were unduly harsh by the global standards of their time. As a famous British envoy to China noted as late as the 1790s, capital punishment for criminals was then "not so comprehensive" in China as it was among the British.[10]

It should be made clear that these are limited claims. The unity of civil and religious powers in China, let alone Korea or Vietnam, was shallow, as were the various state Confucianisms themselves. And whatever effectiveness such a unity did possess brought in its wake potentially negative developmental consequences as well as more positive ones. To understand them, it is necessary to examine the centralized identity-creation processes of the civilization the Chinese, Vietnamese, and Korean courts shared, and to which their civil religions were integral. There was as much of a family resemblance among philosophers and theory-makers in Korea and Vietnam as there was between, say, Italian Renaissance humanists and more northerly European ones like Erasmus. Sharing a common literacy in classical Chinese, encouraged by the existence of civil-service examinations generally similar to China's, Korean and Vietnamese writers could even hold direct but silent writing-brush dialogues with each other during their interacting visits to China as diplomats, as in the 1597 "summit" colloquy in Beijing between the Vietnamese scholar-envoy Phung Khac Khoan and the Korean historian Yi Su-gwang. They might also think it appropriate to compare national capacities for state-

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craft. The great Vietnamese philosopher Le Quy Don (1726–1784) in a 1777 work famously marveled at Korea's unique dynastic stability; the fact that Korea had been ruled by a mere two dynasties between the tenth and the eighteenth centuries, he commented, ought to cause "shame" to the less politically stable Chinese.[11]

In all three societies, political power rested upon a mixture of Confucian ethics and law. The ethics enshrined the obligations of the hierarchical relationships known as the "three bonds" (*san gang* in Chinese, *sam gang* in Korean, *tam cuong* in Vietnamese): the subject's submission to the ruler, the children's submission to their parents, and the wife's submission to her husband. The various law codes all took their general inspiration from earlier Chinese codes. Indeed, the Vietnamese law code of the early 1800s was a copy of the Qing dynasty law code of China. In historical terms, classical Chinese law had the same influence in Confucian Asia as Roman law did in western Europe. In addition, starting no later than the fifteenth century, the rulers of all three societies organized their central administrations around six specialized ministries, dividing government into matters of personnel and appointments; finance and taxes; rites and education; war; justice and punishment; and public works. The particular family resemblance of these six ministries in Seoul, Beijing, and Hanoi (Thang-long) can be traced to the six divisions of administration outlined in a text about government organization that was probably written before Chinese unification in 221 B.C.: the *Zhou li* (Rituals of Zhou). Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese scholars in this period were greatly concerned with the adequacy or inadequacy of this ancient text as a guide to state organization, while European political philosophers in the same period were concerned with the legacy of the Athenian *polis*.

We are just beginning to appreciate the differences in nationally experienced collective identities (let alone regionally experienced or class-specific ones) within this Confucian realm that stretched, however thinly, from Manchuria to the Mekong River, and whose common features had begun to mature by the late 1400s. In northeast Asia, the *yangban* ruling class of Choson Korea became increasingly segregated from the commoners,

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even though they still had to pass examinations to gain government appointments. They married only among themselves and lived in separate villages, claiming many of the attributes of a restored aristocracy despite the examination system's meritocratic logic. In Southeast Asia, on the other hand, there was no aristocratic restoration comparable in strength to Korea's within the framework of the Vietnamese examination system. Unlike the Korean *yangban*, high-ranking Vietnamese mandarins lived in ordinary villages, which astonished nineteenth-century French observers, some of whom contrasted it with the lack of high-ranking resident officials in Tsarist Russia's villages.[12]

As part of their seemingly greater stability and structural rigor, Koreans took pride in differentiating themselves from China by stressing much more clearly the distinction between sons of primary and secondary wives in descent groups. They held that this was a Korean "national practice" that exposed the inferiority of late imperial China's blurred descent lines and admission of slaves to officialdom.[13] In contrast, Vietnamese often celebrated their collective identity by trying to dilute the rigors of Confucian hierarchy rather than tightening them as in Korea. Elite Vietnamese women, such as the remarkable Ho Xuan Huong in the early 1800s, could write bawdy poetic attacks on the injustices of patriarchal inequality;[14] some Vietnamese courts sacralized bilateral kinship ties and conferred ministerial-level honors on palace women, even royal wet nurses.

Yet in looking at the conceptualization of the polity in the three Confucian monarchies, it is important to emphasize one additional shared feature: the very strong sense of a political "center" that received tribute from its peripheries and universalized its own principles outward to them in return. The classics that all three countries shared, notably the *Zhou li* mentioned previously and the "tribute of Yu" section of the *Shujing* (Classic of Documents), spoke of a legendary cultural hero who had divided the ancient world into nine regions, the most important being the "Central Domain" (*zhong zhou* in Chinese).

This notion of a political center was mythic and prebureaucratic. As part of a very ancient and no doubt pre-Confucian search for the permanent or the eternal, this metropolitan archetype of transcendence was more political and

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cultural than the religious one that Rome supplied to Christian Europe. It was incorporated in a variety of ways into the political consciousness of the mature Confucian empire-kingdoms. When the great Cantonese poet and rebel Qu Dajun (1630–1696) wrote a pathbreaking investigation of Cantonese culture in which he analyzed the historical human settlement of the south China province of Guangdong, he argued that it was a matter of migrants from north China flourishing for centuries in the south without losing "the clear and pure material energy" of the "Central Domain" from which they had come.[15] For him, the center had physical characteristics that migrations away from it could not dissolve. In Vietnam, one ambitious emperor in 1835 dramatized the claims of his capital city to be the core of a geographically transposed but ideologically correct new "Central Domain" in Southeast Asia by constructing nine bronze urns at his ancestral temple in Hue, thus suggesting that he was the actual successor of the mythic cultural hero who had once presided over the world's primordial nine regions.[16] To this day, Vietnamese anthropologists refer to their own dominant ethnic Vietnamese people of Vietnam as the "capital city" or "metropolitan" people (*nguoi Kinh*), as contrasted with Vietnam's ethnic minorities, like the Khmers or the Hmong, who are implicitly nonmetropolitan.

There is a Western temptation to associate "traditional" kingdoms with decentralized medieval polities consisting of dispersed dominions and relatively autonomous local lordships, and "modern" states with more centered political systems that have absorbed the formerly autonomous lordships; the "Central Domain" myth makes this work very poorly in Confucian Asia outside of Japan. Of course, the notion of centralized unity was as much an ideal as a reality. (When the reformer Liang Qichao introduced Rousseau to Chinese student readers in 1901, he proposed that China could teach Rousseauism to all nations because of the presumed ease with which China's relatively self-possessed localities could be converted into Swiss canton-like corporate bodies with authentically expressed General Wills, thus turning China into a gigantic Asian Switzerland.)[17] But theory matters, even if it is incompletely realized. The theoretical strength of the idea of the politically all-expressive center made critical

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reflections upon the foundations of political society in China, Vietnam, and Korea different from what they were in Europe.

To make this clear, we could compare, very arbitrarily, two contemporaries at opposite ends of seventeenth-century Eurasia who struggled to give a greater methodological certainty to theories of the constitution of political power: Samuel Pufendorf (1632–1694) in Europe and Lu Shiyi (1611–1672) in China. Pufendorf was concerned with, among other things, the contracts of association and subjection by which the wills of many people could be united. Lu Shiyi was concerned with showing why one central ruler could not rule without delegating power to an administrative elite. Whereas Pufendorf wished to manage participation in such a way as to achieve greater centralization, Lu Shiyi wanted to manage centralization so as to achieve greater participation.

The idealized importance of the political center to the Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese sense of collective identity was consolidated by the fact that all three societies were governed by a scholar elite with a particular type of historical consciousness. Korea borrowed the Chinese tradition of dynastic histories as early as A.D. 1145, with the appearance of Kim Pu-sik's *Samguk sagi* (Historical Annals of the Three Kingdoms). Vietnam followed a century later when Le Van Huu completed his *Dai Viet su ky* (Historical Annals of the Great Viet Kingdom) in 1272. The very word for "history" used in the three monarchies (*shi* in Chinese, *sa* in Korean, *su* in Vietnamese) referred, in its original meaning, to the different types of royal secretaries and scribes at the political system's center who wrote and preserved the government ordinances and princely genealogies of ancient Chinese rulers. The concept thus expressed a determination to centralize political memory, a crucial enterprise in Confucian polity formation. As interpreted by Vietnamese and Korean historians, it also expressed a determination to oppose any textual imperialism in Chinese court histories that demeaned the importance of the Vietnamese and Korean political centers. As such, history writing became a major form of oppositional "boundary maintenance" by Vietnamese and Korean state centers and their elites against Chinese hegemony.

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By the seventeenth century, all three polities' self-representations struggled to gain a greater historical and practical concreteness as a result of the triumph of a broader empirical learning within Confucian thought itself. The broadened empiricism was less inclined to do what earlier Confucianisms had done: subordinate learning to intuitive moral understanding or to the cultivation of personal shame. In all three countries, this shift in the intellectual agenda was celebrated in a cult of "practical learning" (*shi xue* in Chinese, *sirhak* in Korean, *thuc hoc* in Vietnamese). Any exploration of multiple modernities has to come to grips with this "practical learning" trend, but it is not easy. Seventeenth-century "practical learning" was more balanced than Western political theory of the same period between concern about how society ought to be governed and how existing society actually was governed; but the greater balance, reflecting the greater stability achieved by the civil religion, did not mean it was less innovative or less prophetic of worlds that were to come. From the end of the 1500s, "practical learning" in China encouraged an outpouring of literature that concerned itself with economic management and advertised itself under salvationist formulas like "order the state and save the world" (*jing guo ji shi*), rendered in English as "statecraft." The abbreviation of this term—*jingji* in Chinese, *kinh te* in Vietnamese, *kyongje* in Korean—is used today to translate the Western concept of "economy" in all three languages. It has been argued that in Japan, which shared this trend, eighteenth-century "statecraft" discourse was part of the "epistemological labor" that facilitated the emergence of an industrializing Japan after 1868.[18]

But at this point Korea might be differentiated from China and Vietnam. In all three countries, "statecraft" thought came into fashion, in part, to cope with such things as the rising importance of money, about which the original Confucian classics had little to say. But in China and Vietnam, statecraft intellectuals also had to face the need for reconceptualizations of territorial order itself. The spatial distributions of economic and cultural power kept shifting dramatically within the frameworks that their centers tried to control. Both polities had long-open land frontiers and had to invent and reinvent themselves within highly mutable frontiers.

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The archetypal statecraft theorist of seventeenth-century China therefore wrote a massive geopolitical encyclopedia of Chinese regions. It addressed—in its first ten pages—the problem of why the core of Chinese economic and cultural creativity had moved in the preceding centuries from the north and northwest to the formerly non-Chinese, "barbarian" southeast. (The European equivalent would be the shift of power from the Mediterranean to the Rhine valley.) His counterpart in eighteenth-century Vietnam wrote a history of the central and southern Vietnamese frontier regions, with a view to enabling the "court gentlemen" of the economically poorer political center in the north to gain an understanding of that frontier without so much as "leaving their courtyards."[19] Chinese and Vietnamese "practical learning" was under great pressure to abbreviate space in order to reconcile expanding, heterogeneous frontiers with the central metropolitan domain—whose legitimizing myth belonged to a smaller, less mobile, precommercial age.

This was less necessary in Korea. The outstanding political difference between the Confucian monarchy in Korea and the ones in China and Vietnam is, of course, Korea's greater stability. Korea had only two dynasties (Koryo, 918–1392, and Yi or Choson, 1392–1910) in ten centuries. This feat inspired Vietnamese admiration two centuries ago, as we have seen, and challenges scholars now. Modern analysts attribute Korea's premodern political stability to a uniquely "symbiotic" relationship between the Korean monarchy and its *yangban* aristocracy—each needed the other.[20] But they also suggest that the Korean *yangban* class was able to perpetuate itself, despite Korea's meritocratic examinations, because Korea was not disrupted by foreign invasions to the same degree that the old Chinese aristocracy had been between the tenth and twelfth centuries, or (one might add) as the medieval Vietnamese governing class had been by a brutal if abortive Chinese attempt to recolonize Vietnam in the early 1400s.[21]

The "territoriality" of the modern peninsular Korean state, north to the Yalu River, was achieved by the medieval Koryo dynasty by the end of the tenth century. Among the mainland Confucian polities, Korea's precocious early "closure" of the national political space was unique. No subsequent foreign

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invasions, not even by the Japanese at the end of the sixteenth century, ever seriously threatened the political or cultural certainty of the Korean kingdom's boundaries before the more modern age of imperialism made Korea a Japanese colony (1910–1945). The territoriality of the monarchy in China, in contrast, grew dramatically in the early modern period at the expense of the Islamic domains in Central Asia, not to mention Lamaist Buddhist domains in Tibet and Mongolia. The territoriality of the Confucian monarchy in Vietnam also grew substantially in this period at the expense of the long-established Hindu-Buddhist kingdoms of Champa and Cambodia, south and west of Vietnam. China and Vietnam were frontier monarchies in a way that Korea did not share. Their conceptions of their political identity were thus repeatedly jostled and contested by the entirely non-Confucian peoples who shared their extended frontiers. And the attempted absorption of such peoples by the Chinese and Vietnamese cores created a crisis in the construction of political order. The absorption had to be managed in terms that would enhance the legitimacy of those political centers and their formally nonhereditary mandarinates.

It is true that China's absorption of Islamic communities in west China and Central Asia in the past few centuries was facilitated by the fact that they were institutionally and culturally still immature. The first great Chinese Islamic scholar of the borderlands, capable of linking such communities in a separatist manner to Arabic and Persian religious worlds beyond the Chinese political center's control, did not appear until the late 1600s (Ma Zhu of Yunnan). It is true too that the non-Chinese peoples of the southwest who were absorbed—such as the Zhuang people (as they have been renamed in twentieth-century China)—were not organized into powerful kingdoms; largely aboriginal nationalities who belonged to a variety of language families, including Tibeto-Burmese and Tai, they were the Asian equivalents of North America's Cherokees, Apaches, and Iroquois. Yet it is a measure of the fragility of the identity of this relatively recent territorialization of China that the kingdom of Siam, under Japanese patronage during the 1937–1945 Sino-Japanese War, converted itself into a more ethnically conscious state named "Thailand" and then unsuccess-

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fully demanded the incorporation of four southwest Chinese provinces with Tai speakers (Guangdong, Guangxi, Guizhou, and Yunnan) into a Bangkok-ruled "Greater East Asia Thai Confederation."[22]

Thus the classical "Central Domain" political model—of an eternal China outside time—had to accommodate real-life cultural and linguistic polycentrism, and mutable and transient frontiers, that were anything but classical and eternal; they threatened to consume the model from its edges inward. At no time was this accommodation problem more severe than in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In this period, the Qing dynasty in China gained control of Tibet and Qinghai (about 20 percent of the present national territory of the People's Republic of China); incorporated into itself the Turkic Uighurs of Xinjiang, the Muslims of Ningxia, and the Tibetans of south Gansu (occupying over 18 percent of China's present national space); and consolidated Beijing's control over Yunnan, Guizhou, and Sichuan (this last huge province was less "Chinese" in the 1700s than it is now). The twentieth-century China that includes Xinjiang, and which we take for granted, actually existed for less than a century (1759–1840) before China collided with Western imperialism.

Vietnam, with its institutions modeled to a significant degree upon those of the huge empire in China, underwent the same expansion and had the same accommodation problem. The medieval Vietnamese polity had been forged in the 1300s and 1400s in a series of wars with the Cham kingdom of what is now central Vietnam. The Chams were a Malayo-Polynesian people with an Indic script, a Brahminist religion, and a most un-Confucian polyandrous national tutelary deity (Po Nagar), whose remarkable temple in Nha Trang can still be visited. The great "southward advance" of the Vietnamese people, down the eastern seaboard of mainland Southeast Asia between the 1400s and the 1700s, doubled Vietnam's size. It meant that the Nguyen dynasty (established in Hue in 1802) was the first Vietnamese government in history to rule Vietnam's present national space, some eight centuries after the Korean monarchy had essentially completed the modern Korean national territory.

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Although the comparative study of center-periphery relations in the politics of the Confucian monarchies has hardly begun, it is crucial to understanding these countries' collective identities. China and Vietnam could never "close" their multiethnic land frontiers, which involved fairly basic religious frontiers as well, as effectively as Choson Korea (or Edo Japan) could "close" their seacoasts. In proportional terms, the Vietnamese political center had perhaps the least power over its frontier. China annexed Tibet in the 1700s, but Vietnam failed in its bid (1834–1841) to annex what remained of Cambodia. So there were at least two "Confucian Asias" as far as the production and reproduction of collective identity was concerned, even in very general typological terms.

Contested identities at the frontiers were not the only threat to the coherence of the state civil religion. Within even the more solid core areas of the Chinese and Vietnamese monarchies, the civil religion had to be stretched far beyond the communal limits that Rousseau would have approved of, as he imagines the ideal civil religion at the end of his *Social Contract*. But did the Confucian monarchies' civil religions resemble Rousseau's? If avoiding most of the European variety of religious warfare is their great historical achievement, the question is worth pondering. One of China's most important teenage Rousseau-worshippers at the beginning of the twentieth century, Liu Shipei (1884–1919), wrote a book, "The Essential Idea of the Chinese Social Contract" (*Zhongguo minyue jingyi*, 1903), that argues for the similarities between what Rousseau was trying to do and what Chinese architects of Confucianism had been doing for many centuries before him. The differences, however, have to be faced. Rousseau, building on Hobbes but eschewing his Christianity, wanted a civil religion that would enhance the powers of the law, and thus the power of the state, as the definer of a superior public good. The Confucian civil religion, as it was imagined in the early Chinese empire that also governed Korea and Vietnam, wanted something quite different. It wanted ritual indoctrination to replace state law as much as possible, diminishing the necessity of a law-based state.

Equally striking, Rousseau wanted a civil religion whose dogmas were simple and few and capable of precise expression.

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But outside the boundaries of a tiny, wholly changeless city-state, this was extreme anthropological naivete, as the Asian Confucian monarchies demonstrated. Their territorial expansion caused their civil religions to lose what "simplicity" they possessed through their inevitable downward vernacularization. Expansion also led to the civil religions being increasingly outflanked by the proliferation of popular spiritual subsistence networks quite outside the political centers' formulations.

The vernacularization of the civil religion had mixed results. On the one hand, as elite thinkers complained, it led to its trivialization: By the 1700s even male commoners were disdaining sacrifices that had once been the privilege of great feudal nobles (such as the sacrifices to the spirits of the door, kitchen, soil, gate, and well) and were assigning them to female servants. On the other hand, vernacularization implied the democratization of elite values. In twelfth-century China, one scholar has argued, the lower classes were not expected to show exceptional virtue. By the eighteenth century, however, female virtues cherished by the civil religion—such as widows' fidelity to deceased husbands—were being publicly recognized with government rewards.[23]

As for the expanding popular religions, contrary to what Rousseau might have thought, the more simple state religion was probably saved—and the religious peace as well—by its forced cohabitation with them; this also meant a further loss of its simplicity, however. Cohabitation compelled the civil religion to stretch its somewhat limited formal "tolerance" in informal ways. As societies grew faster than their governments, Taoist and Buddhist deities like the Jade Emperor and the Goddess of Mercy bodhisattva became expressions of a popular religious will that had little to do with official temple sacrifices. Other deities, both local and vocational, proliferated; stories about popular deities even became a consumer good as they were transmitted in plays and novels. As this happened, the monarchies were tempted to supplement their civil religion by manipulating cults that were theoretically outside the civil religion's ambit. As one Chinese county magistrate put it in 1793, ordinary people feared their own local gods but not the official ones. But that was not alarming: state officials

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could respond by promoting such local gods, because the gods' "efficacy" lay not in themselves but in the masses' mentality of religious service.[24] It can be argued that as the prosthetic heterogeneity of the Confucian monarchies' religious underpinnings intensified, they had all the more incentive to avoid religious strife. This was so even as the "Confucian" nature of their identity weakened.

COLLECTIVE IDENTITY MAINTENANCE VERSUS UNIVERSALISM

The advent of unofficial religions with greater emotional power was not the only reason why the state religion evolved in the two Confucian frontier monarchies. It expanded through vernacularization as well as by cultivating what potentialities it had for a greater universalism, where it eventually encountered interesting limits.

The transcontinental collective identity that the eighteenth-century Beijing monarchy tried to create in the Islamic oasis towns of Xinjiang and the malarial hill corridors of Yunnan was based on the neo-Confucian doctrine that "all things are of one body" (*wanwu yiti*), which originated in the early Confucian notion of the unity of Heaven and humankind and was further developed by later neo-Confucian philosophers in medieval China. But its first major application by agents of the political center to non-Chinese peoples in the imperial borderlands appears not to have come before the 1500s. At that point, Wang Yangming (1472–1529), critically important as both a philosopher and a bureaucrat, tried to use it to restore order among the rebellious minorities of the southwest. Having previously slaughtered thousands of aboriginal people during a near-genocidal war to incorporate the southwest into a Beijing-ruled political order, Wang is said to have suffered remorse. He improvised a universalistic "one body" civil religion, which had a number of principles besides the "three bonds" patriarchal ethic. It taught that all human beings, regardless of ethnicity, were perceived as equals by the sages; all human beings possessed an innate consciousness about what was good; all human beings therefore deserved to be schooled; and the way of the sages inhered in aboriginal sellers of firewood just as much as in Chinese officials.[25]

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Other parts of the doctrine—that all aboriginals were like unpolished gems—hinted at the manipulative authoritarianism that underlay it. Yet this sixteenth-century inflation of a much older moral philosophy, in order to map the expanding empire prophetically as a space for ethnicity-blind Confucian educators, did have its heroic qualities. Chinese idealists could try to use the expanded creed to override entrenched Chinese racial prejudices and encourage minorities to take the civil-service examinations.

Islam's maturation in the 1700s, both inside China itself and on its far western borders, presented the new Manchu emperors of China with the ultimate test of the viability of the empire-as-one-body doctrine. As the Chinese population grew, accompanied by a corresponding increase in multiethnic confrontations within the political order, non-Islamic Chinese protested to Beijing about the visible otherness or separatism of Muslims, both Chinese and non-Chinese: their strange clothes, their strange Arabic texts, their strange rival calendars and sense of time, their mosques. China's eighteenth-century rulers could salvage the "one body" civil religion's tolerance only by making relativistic distinctions, within the officially imposed collective identity, between what they regarded as essential or "orthodox" (*zheng*) and what they regarded as nonessential or "local" (*tu*), and then expanding the "local" category against the protests of local communities. Thus they decreed that the features of the Islamic groups to which the non-Islamic population objected were merely subpolitical inherited "local" practices from a distant past, and therefore acceptable.

Beijing's rulers in this period struggled to magnify the moral objectivity of the political center by identifying it as the source of a monistic "single viewpoint with the same benevolence for all" (*yishi tongren*). This notion was a medieval neo-Confucian formula. It was now pressed into service, about a millennium after it first appeared, to justify the central authority of the multiethnic eighteenth-century empire.[26] In practical terms, this meant the opening of state schools from Shandong to Xinjiang with new Confucian curricula especially designed for Muslims.

By borrowing a medieval vocabulary and grandly transposing it to a huge political system, doubled in size, that tried to

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accommodate even Islam, eighteenth-century emperors of China expanded at least the symbolic dimensions of their power. (The Islamic part of the newly conquered Xinjiang remained in reality a repressive military colony of Beijing.) There is at least a faint parallelism of method here with the efforts of early-modern Western political theorists to expand a system like democracy by borrowing medieval concepts of representation to get around the previous limitations of the classical theory of democracy, which had blocked its spatial extension by holding that truly democratic legislatures had to comprise the whole body of citizens. In both China and Europe, the growth of polities created a challenge: a reconfigured medieval vocabulary had to be used to buttress the perceived objectivity and legitimacy of the political center. The difference is that in Europe, the theoretical repackaging of the old in order to achieve something new was transmuted into a legal and constitutional process; in the Confucian monarchies of Asia, it was transmuted into a cultural and educational one.

The Vietnamese adoption of China's theme of a political center dispensing impartial benevolence to all ethnic groups, about a century after it was consolidated as the imperial creed in China, illustrates more of the potentialities of the "single viewpoint with the same benevolence for all" formula (*nhat thi dong nhan* in Vietnamese). But it also illustrates its practical weakness when the political center in question, although steeped in the "Central Domain" classicism, did not have sufficient economic and social weight. In the early 1800s, one Vietnamese emperor combined the doctrine, as China had in the early 1700s, with a campaign to convert the hereditary leaders of Vietnam's hill-country minorities into appointed circulating bureaucrats with examination-system degrees, who might or might not share the ethnic identities of the minorities they ruled. Then, to stress the transition from political tribalism to neo-Confucian administrative universalism, the Vietnamese ruler went even further. Historically, Vietnam had been the one Confucian monarchy in Asia whose country names (Dai Viet, Viet Nam) had celebrated the existence of a specific ethnic group (the Viet or the Yue). In 1839, the Vietnamese court officially changed the name of the country it governed to "The

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Great South" (Dai Nam), with the explanation that Vietnam's recent territorial thrust south to the Mekong delta justified this retreat from ethnicity in its political nomenclature.[27]

But as a formula for the bureaucratic incorporation of minorities, the center's "single viewpoint with the same benevolence" principle worked differently in the two monarchies. In China, fewer than two thousand hereditary minority chieftains survived Beijing's bureaucratization of them in the 1700s and 1800s, and they saw their actual power reduced almost to the point where it was meaningless.[28] (The last "local officers" in the southwest were finally removed by the Chinese Communists in 1956.) In Vietnam, in contrast, minorities occupied approximately three-quarters of Vietnam's newly achieved national space, as opposed to China's one-half to two-thirds. The centralizing Vietnamese court soon had to back down in the face of minority opposition and return to a less bureaucratic, indirect rule.[29] The 1839 change to a more universalistic, postethnic name for the country did not survive. The Vietnamese political center, employing roughly the same political theory as China, had a weaker capacity to absorb its ethnic peripheries into an officially postethnic bureaucratic identity through the use of an expanded neo-Confucian civil religion. It lacked the informal leverage it needed. The Vietnamese people simply did not enjoy as wide a demographic or entrepreneurial superiority over the minorities their court ruled as the millions of Han Chinese migrants did over southwest China's minorities.

In both China and Vietnam, the chief factor of any elite collective identity that stressed universalism rather than tribalism was the civil-service examination system. The examinations reinforced the prebureaucratic myth of an eternal "Central Domain," by being a vertically integrated hierarchy in which the most important examinations took place in the capital city and were given by the ruler himself. Although the examination sites at which thousands of candidates congregated could not have been called a public sphere in any sense except the Hegelian one (a public sphere that integrated would-be elites into the polity from above, by means of education, not a public sphere in which it was common for autonomous would-be citizens to interact privately), the examinations' expansion

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allowed the political system to increase its powers of accommodation and integration.[30] Indeed, the center-commanded examinations might be regarded as a functional substitute for the accelerated development of political-obligation theory of the sort one finds in the Europe of Richelieu and Locke. The massive rote memorization that the political centers imposed upon the thousands of candidates who took the examinations supplied the cognitive basis of an extraordinarily strong elite identity. The importance of this expanded as the two monarchies expanded.

Did the Confucian universalism that the examinations apparently stood for have much similarity with European Enlightenment visions of an integrated Europe as the foundation of an expanding humanity? Only embryonically. The examination system's quest for the universal ultimately failed for many reasons. Confucian societies had a stronger faith than the pre-Enlightenment West in the natural goodness of individual people and in human perfectibility through education. They were not thwarted in this belief by anything comparable to the West's Augustinian view of humankind as a mass of perdition, let alone the Aristotelian view that some people were slaves by nature. Yet women as well as various categories of men were still excluded from the civil-service examinations. For this and other reasons, at the end of the 1700s only about 2 percent of the Chinese population actually belonged to the degree-holding elite that the examinations created. Ironically, larger percentages of the population in far more feudal and less meritocratic eastern European societies in the same period, such as Poland, belonged to the hereditary nobility.

Confucianism itself was only ambiguously universalistic: it taught the necessity of putting family considerations before global ones, men before women. But there was also a tension—similar in some ways to that in Western labor unions—between the examinations' symbolization of an emancipatory universality and the defensive corporatism of the class-specific (and gender-specific) interests the examinations created and embodied. The question that hung over the examinations was "modern," or at least postfeudal: how to create an elite with a publicly dedicated self-esteem, rather than merely disguised

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self-aggrandizing instincts, in a society whose rulers were in principle made more than they were born? But modern answers, such as the worship of a national interest, or the elite's self-encouraged mission as agents of economic progress, were not available.

As they managed the tension between universalism and corporatism, the bigger and smaller Confucian monarchies exposed interesting differences. In China, the scholar-official class experienced a growing status anxiety. Their claims to power shrank in the face of a commercial revolution and population growth. Major spokesmen for this class painted pictures of a catastrophic decline in its income standards between the seventh and the seventeenth centuries, thanks to the disappearance of land-based appanage stipends for bureaucrats in favor of centralized money salaries.[31] Rulers had to respond to this status anxiety; they did so by defending the increasingly insolvent degree-holding elite's claims to a nobility-like distinction through such discriminatory means as excluding the sons of policemen from the examinations in 1803.[32] In Vietnam, the scholar-official class suffered less status anxiety. There was less progressive monetization of their salaries, and the absence of rich cities and big landlord families comparable to Chinese ones implied both a smaller supply of candidates for degree status and fewer extra-bureaucratic competitors for power as a result of the commercial differentiation of the social structure. But if there was less status anxiety, there was more socialization anxiety. Effective state Confucianism developed later in Vietnam than in China and Korea, if not Japan. Vietnamese scholars' corporatism reflected the need of a society with a weaker political center, at the margins of the Confucian world, to convert primitive pre-Confucian heroic leadership traditions into equally distinctive Confucian forms of elite fulfillment—rather like the struggle in medieval Europe to convert pagan warriors into Christian knights.

In the end, elite corporatism allied itself to the monarchies' interest in hardening all the potential softness in the collective identities upon which their centers depended—an interest that ultmately was greater than their desire to perfect their universality. The impulse to standardize overcame the impulse to

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universalize. For example, even the eighteenth-century French monarchy did not make French linguistic unity a policy goal, nor did it see linguistic diversity as a threat to its administrative unity.[33] Because of the examination system, the same could not be completely true of the Chinese or Vietnamese monarchies. In China, the elite political territory of the empire might be defined from above—however superficially and quixotically—in terms of speech sound. In 1772, the Beijing court distributed free copies of a government-sponsored rhyming dictionary to examination candidates in some provinces, decreeing that the language sounds of the "Central Domain" were standard and must be followed in the examinations' poetry tests. And in 1777, the court gave the northern and southwestern border students in China's regional examinations an amnesty period of three decades in which to suppress their local speech habits and conform to the "Central Domain" speech tones.[34]

Similarly, ethnic minorities could participate in the examinations only by accepting a cultural straitjacket imposed by the political centers. Nineteenth-century emperors in Vietnam spoke of converting the Hmong, Tai, and Nung minorities of the far north to "the customs of the North China Plain" (*Trung Ha*), by which they meant the customs of the Vietnamese ethnic core areas of Vietnam, not China. (This is how the Hue political center could strip Chinese place names of their geographical meaning and convert them into the floating signifiers of a centralizing culture that transcended geography.) Following the policy of emperors in China, Vietnamese rulers also tried to impose Vietnamese family names upon their frontier minorities. They believed that the proper patrilineal kinship patterns that such surnames reflected, central as they were to the Confucian state creed, would better integrate the minorities—many of which were matrilineal—into the central political order's fiscal, judicial, and educational administration. The Cambodians of southern Vietnam, for example, were to be socially and bureaucratically reorganized in the early 1800s under five surnames (Kim, Thach, Son, Lam, and Danh) that the center had chosen for them.[35]

But fear of the frontiers, as much as the desire to colonize them, may have been the real reason for the shortcomings of the political centers' universalism in both China and Vietnam. Both

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courts were well aware that identities imposed from the top down were porous and fragile. On China's frontiers, in William Rowe's words, "the historical reality of centuries had been . . . that far more Chinese had acculturated to aboriginal life than aborigines to Chinese civilization."[36] Dialectically, the political centers and their advocates actually used the cautionary fear of reverse assimilability to underline the necessity of the principle of metropolitan transcendence, whatever the human costs.

This was particularly true in what we now call south China—the region that stretches from the Yangtze River south to Taiwan and Southeast Asia. It had once been the homeland of a major non-Chinese ethnic conglomerate, the Yue people, who had broken up into a diaspora of ethnic fragments after a military defeat in the fourth century B.C., about a century before the First Emperor (as he called himself) unified "China" in 221 B.C. To geopolitical thinkers of the mature Chinese empire many centuries later, the legend of the Yue people was almost like an Asian version of the lost tribes of Israel, minus the religious dimensions. Who were the Yue now, and where were they? Were they still a significant presence in south China itself, undermining its claims to be fully "Chinese"? Or had they moved to Southeast Asia, particularly to the Southeast Asian kingdom that so provocatively named itself after them as the "Yue South" (Viet Nam) or "Great Yue" (Dai Viet) polity?

The Cantonese scholar Qu Dajun addressed this problem in an essay entitled "The Real Yue People" (*Zhen Yueren*). It appeared a few years after his death in 1696. Qu was a Ming dynasty loyalist who opposed the new Manchu rulers in Beijing. Equally important, the book in which his essay appeared, a "new" codification of the Cantonese experience, connected the ascendant tradition of empirical "practical learning" to a nonmetropolitan project of "framing" or "encapsulating" the whole empire of China from the vantage point of one southern province, with the clear implication that the political order rested upon multiple regional selves and polyphonous (though not plural) identities. So no one was better placed to relativize the political center than Qu Dajun.

However, his essay about the Yue diaspora was chiefly concerned with validating the center-created Chineseness of the

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Cantonese realm (Guangdong). It proposed that the "real Yue," if they survived in seventeenth-century south China, were merely a shrunken remnant of "tattooed" non-Chinese minorities. It praised China's archetypal centralizer, the brutal northern militarist who had called himself the First Emperor, for transforming ancient Guangdong's barbarism by forcibly shipping marginal "Chinese people" (*Zhongguo zhi ren*) south as settlers. The essay also demonized a more humane northern general of that period, Zhao Tuo, for becoming a separatist from the center and "going native" when he governed Guangdong, making it look as if "Central Domain" values were negotiable rather than absolute.[37] Thus even the most politically discontented south-Chinese elite thinkers upheld the principle of strong central emperorships as the best defense against the cultural (and ethnic) porousness of the imperial frontiers.

CONCLUSION

Putting the history of the Confucian monarchies' political order into a global perspective is not easy. The Chinese philosopher Liang Shuming's solution of sixty years ago—use evolutionary metaphors but find additional ones in order to enrich the stock that Western scholars were then using—will no longer do. That does not mean that there was not justice in his claim that imperial China had been juvenile but never medieval, meaning that it had known a greater general religious tolerance than medieval Europe but had not achieved the individual civil liberties that the West acquired when it became more maturely modern. The best intellectual solution might well be to abandon any hope of a unified analytical narrative with an omniscient narrator in looking at the rise of the politically modern in both the Confucian monarchies and the West, turning instead to the "technique of complementary viewpoints" (*hujian fa*) found in the "historical annals" genre of the classical Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese historians, which favored multiple narrations, displacements of chronology, and a greater acceptance of readers' participation in the act of interpretation.[38]

Against this we have to face the fact that contemporary Asian political leaders, in their need for heroic reenactments of

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earlier presumed triumphs of evolution, are at present perfectly willing to appropriate the most Eurocentric developmental landmarks and make them their own. Where an earlier generation of Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese revolutionaries wanted to reenact the Paris Commune as imagined by Karl Marx, their postrevolutionary successors now want to reenact Silicon Valley as imagined by Alvin Toffler. Modernization theory expresses the aspirations of Asian thinkers as well as Western ones for a better world, as well as the will to power. Postmodernist complaints about the deficiencies of "foundational" theories of this kind are still confined largely to a Western academic intelligentsia; they may even seem—to Asian intellectuals who misunderstand them—to be a veiled effort to deny Asians the empowerment of modernity.

If we were to revisit the old Eurocentric historical landmarks one last time, how would we modify them in light of the experience of China, Vietnam, and Korea? One of the most familiar of these landmarks is the claim that the French revolutionaries' execution of Louis XVI marked history's passage from the early modern (a rationalizing bureaucracy yoked to an absolute despotism) to the modern (a nation-state based on mass citizenship). The relative religious peace of China, Korea, and Vietnam exacted a price, and the difficulty of navigating this particular passage was part of it. The very success of their politically mediated civil religions made the emergence of a public sphere controlled by legitimate interest groups less likely than in Europe. The Confucian scholars' predisposition, driven by the civil religion, to search for forms of transcendence in this world rather than the next forbade the total separation of the spheres of the ruler and his would-be advisers. The critical elite wanted to share the public sphere creatively with the monarch, not separate it from him. This desire, combined with that sphere's close association with the idealized paramountcy of a "Central Domain," foreclosed the possibility for constitutionally differentiated power, socially or spatially. Indeed, the administrative term in nineteenth-century China and Vietnam that Western scholars so freely translate as "province" (*sheng* in Chinese, *tinh* in Vietnamese) really meant a branch "department" or a branch "secretariat" of the central government.

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In the early twentieth century, the old civil religion remained strong enough to compromise the Western idea of a "republic" in these countries. The more formal term for "republic" in twentieth-century China (*gonghe guo*) and Vietnam (*Nha nuoc Cong hoa*) conveys not the Roman *res publica* notion of a public sphere devoted to the "business of the people" but rather the sense of a "harmonious togetherness country."[39] Similarly, when Confucian Asia early in this century had to invent an equivalent for the Western term "society," a Japanese philosopher found the winning formula (*shakai* in Japanese, *shehui* in Chinese, *xa hoi* in Vietnamese) by borrowing a centuries-old classical term that had once referred to a communal religious gathering.[40] Early national anthems in China tried to preserve the civil religion's idea of a territoriality that was universal and prophetic, not parochial and bristling with geographical closures. In the words of the national anthem that China briefly chose in 1911, the people of the Qing empire (which was about to founder) were invited to sing about themselves as living in an ecumenical "golden cup, domed by the Celestial conclave," rather than in a compulsory Weberian-style political association that monopolized legal modes of violence, such as the rockets and bombs in that unintentionally most Weberian of national anthems, *The Star-Spangled Banner*.[41]

But if the passage from "early modern" to "modern," defined Eurocentrically, has come late in this part of the world, it might be said with equal confidence that the "early modern"—meaning a centrally organized political command system strong enough and technically sophisticated enough to penetrate its territories in such a way as to transcend feudal particularisms, political and military, and greatly influence even local class struggles—came earlier in parts of Confucian Asia than it did in Europe. The eighth century, indeed, would make a good choice as the first century in world history of the politically "early modern." It was in this century that the Chinese court first gained what it thought was a capacity to impose massive, consolidating, central tax reforms from the top down, which few European monarchies would have thought possible before the French Revolution, given their privileged towns, provinces, nobles, and clergy. Central tax reforms elsewhere, such as the

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Uniform Land Tax Law of seventeenth-century Korea, were part of this heritage. With this capacity came also in the eighth century the decline of the landed aristocracy that had previously dominated China and the beginnings of the ascendancy of the civil-service examinations that have been previously discussed. The success of the examinations in turn reflected an expansion of trust in invisible authority, or in abstract capacities, that went beyond anything of the sort in Europe at that time and was embodied in the subsequent Chinese invention of the world's first paper money. If the French Revolution marks the beginning of the modern in world history, the epoch of the Tang-Song dynasty in China (seventh to thirteenth centuries), with whatever reverberations it had in Korea and Vietnam, is as important as the beginning of the early modern. Little energy was wasted in China in this epoch on religious crusades or sterile quarrels between religious and political leaders.

But here the enterprise grinds to a halt. China two hundred years ago was an uninterrupted land empire of three hundred million people living in entirely preindustrial circumstances within a rational, internally consistent political framework; no such polity has ever existed in Western history. It was not only stranger than any Western theorist might think, it was also slightly stranger than we can imagine, using the motley language of state formation that we get from centuries of a much more politically fragmented European experience. Our situation is a little like that of the sixteenth-century European explorers in the Americas who first struggled to find the words to describe the astonishing biodiversity of Brazil for home audiences who had never seen it. (The explorers at least could paint pictures.) We need to construct a more historically "open" language of social and political analysis than the one we have. With respect to China, Korea, and Vietnam, such a language would not necessarily accommodate only Confucianism. A Chinese economist told the readers of China's leading economics journal in 1997 that Taoist theories of noninterference are as valuable as the "invisible hand" of Western economics in thinking about contemporary state-society relations.[42] This suggests that a slightly less Westernized language of analysis—one that saw political systems as embodiments of intuitive knowledge as well

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as of rational-legal principles—might be the means by which postcolonial Max Webers could emerge.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

For helpful criticism of earlier drafts of this paper, I thank Yunshik Chang, Torbjorn Loden, and the leaders and other participants at the Uppsala conference.

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Bernhard Giesen

Cosmopolitans, Patriots, Jacobins, and Romantics

COSMOPOLITANISM AND THE EXTENDED COURT SYSTEM: THE LUMIÈRES IN FRANCE

CONTRARY TO THE COMMON ASSUMPTION that views the Enlightenment as a heterodox movement at a marked distance to the absolutist state, this essay will argue that the French Enlightenment can be described as an extension of absolutist court culture.

The absolutist state increased its control over territory and the population by expanding a network of taxation, administration, jurisdiction, and public services. Yet at the same time it supported the arts and sciences by grants, stipends, and appointments in order to stress the splendor of princely rule.[1] The most important institutional results of these activities in the realm of culture were the colleges and the academies of arts and sciences, founded in the second half of the seventeenth and at the beginning of the eighteenth century. These institutions established new arenas of cultural discourse independent of the church—but also partly autonomous with respect to the ruler. The universities, hitherto under the direct control and surveillance of the church, were taken over by the state and adapted to the requirements of educating the increasing number of civil servants and public officers.

Thus, the absolutist state of the eighteenth century established a range of institutions that could be regarded as modern rivals to the traditional arenas of commerce, culture, politics, and education.

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The Noblesse de Robe *and the* Philosophes

The expansion of the absolutist state required and produced a new class of civil servants and office holders who were recruited on the basis of not privilege and descent but education and examination. Not only were the positions of this new class dependent on the absolutist state, but its way of thinking was inflected by modern ideas of enlightened absolutism, science, mercantilist economics, and the impersonal rule of the law, all of which formed the basis of their professional activities. This new class represented a central channel of modernization, but it aspired to inclusion in court society and stressed its distance from the *vile peuple.* Even the term "bourgeois" had an offensive, degrading meaning for them.[2]

Moreover, the absolutist state had leveled the differences in status between the old aristocracy and the new elite of civil servants and public officials by raising large numbers of the population to the nobility. By the end of the century, the old aristocracy by descent, the *noblesse d'épée,* had been superseded by the increasing group of *noblesse de robe,* which represented the educated public. By this time, less than 10 percent of the French nobility could claim noble lineage of longer than 150 years. This new aristocracy, the *gens de robe,* wanted to be accepted as *honnêtes hommes et femmes* and tried to distinguish itself in terms of its manners and social conduct.

The state and its new elite also provided careers and opportunities for the intellectuals of the French Enlightenment.[3] Only a few were able to make a living from the sale of their books. The low degree of professionalization in intellectual activity also prevented the *philosophes* from becoming specialists. Most were capable of writing not only novels or philosophical critiques but scientific essays, historical dramas, and political commentary; some were even working on technical projects. The degree of functional differentiation between intellectual disciplines was low, and the interchangeability of the roles of writer and reader fostered a mutual identification. Although transcending state borders, the total readership of the *philosophes* was limited (compared with the large readership for religious treatises during the Reformation), and illicit copies and translations were quite common.

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Most of the leading figures of the French Enlightenment had some position in the civil service, received grants from the court or from aristocratic benefactors, or lived off the revenues of their estates. Even if they were not directly dependent on the benevolence of the absolutist state, they had to reckon with the mentality of the court system, whose members, along with the *noblesse de robe,* the civil service, and the academies, were their most important readers. This integration into the extended system of the absolutist state did not, however, engender strict control of their cultural activities. Despite occasional cases of harsh censorship, the French absolutist system was quite liberal. In the expanding system of government and administration, power was fragile and elusive; decisions were frequently debated among several parties, each trying to convince the others in order to gain support and weaken the adversary position. The court system and the *parlements* and academies thus gave rise to arenas of internal discourse, where arguments were applied strategically and the brilliant rhetoric of the *philosophes* was most welcome.

The Discourse of the Salons

The influence of the absolutist court extended even to modes of associations and patterns of sociality in the French Enlightenment. This sociality was clearly oriented towards the social life of the court, rather than adopting the traditional customs of the local commercial bourgeoisie. Although the famous *salons* of eighteenth-century France, in critical distinction to the court, claimed to represent *la bonne compagnie,* they constituted an extension of the pattern of aristocratic conversation at the royal court, which was itself influenced by Italian manuals for the counselors of the prince.[4] The first *salons* in the seventeenth century were centered on the *hôtels* of the aristocracy in the Marais. With the increasing importance of the *noblesse de robe,* the basis of conversation changed: descent was replaced by education, *bienséance,* and *esprit* as the fundamental code of communication.[5] The central position of women was reflected in the value placed on *galanterie* and engendered an erotic ambivalence that stimulated and softened rhetorical competitiveness.

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The *salons* were based on oral communication and dealt with ambitious written texts in a light, witty, and extemporizing manner. The physical presence of a speaker and an audience and the requirements of repartee enlived communication, preventing lengthy proclamations and boring repetition. Failure to entertain one's audience and gauche behavior were marks of mediocrity and grounds for ridicule; both uncritical agreement and blunt contradiction could cause one's interlocutor to terminate a conversation. Common strategies for maintaining conversation included doing everything possible to delight and entertain, remaining deliberately ambivalent, and keeping one's terms of argumentation general. Nobody could insist on membership in the *salons* or apply for inclusion; instead, admission was granted by the favor of the hostess.

Although by no means small, the social catchment area of the *salons* was highly selective. The *noblesse de robe* and the upper ranks of the civil service prevailed, members of the court and old aristocracy were welcome, and wealthy merchants sometimes appeared as regular guests; but there was no place here for local craftsmen or shopkeepers, let alone for peasants and servants. The latter classes lacked the education, manners, and economic independence that were regarded as indispensable for participation in public discourse.

In the *salon* debates on political decisions, the public sphere emerged as a mediating realm of deliberation, compensating for the complex, factioned absolutist system. Clashes between institutions (in particular, between the royal government and the *parlements*), conflicts of authority within hierarchies, divisions between parties at court, the complexities of favoritism—all were softened and balanced by an informal mode of communication where the art of rhetoric and argumentation mattered more than the status of the speaker. Like every complex organization, the absolutist state gave rise to an informal sphere of direct communication in which formal authority was counteracted and even challenged by informal influence and personal connections. Gossip and rumor flourished in such a situation, but so also did moral zeal and universalism.

The *salons* thus provided an interface between arcane gossip and public deliberation. They were centered around spoken com-

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munication but included too many people to maintain discretion and secrecy: everyone had to account for the effects of his or her words on unknown outsiders. This partial openness to outside scrutiny fostered reference to universalistic arguments. In the (albeit limited) public sphere of the *salons,* the writings of intellectuals could be used as a symbolic resource in order to convince others to join a particular party or to give support to a contested decision. The *philosophes* were usually not tied to a particular party in political conflicts; they switched allegiance according to the situation, sometimes favoring aristocratic opposition to the king in the French *parlements,* sometimes supporting the king against the *parlements.* From being an intellectual movement, which was still contested at the beginning of the century, the *lumières* grew to be the dominant school of thought in the decades before the Revolution.

Universalist Collective Identity

Despite all this internal diversity, there was one persistent line of opposition uniting most Enlightenment intellectuals: they were against the traditional dogma of the church and in favor of science.

At the core of the new cultural discourse was the schism between *les anciens* and *les modernes,* which dates back to the famous *Querelle* of the seventeenth century and centers on a fundamental difference in the understanding of time and history.

The universalism of Enlightenment discourse was based on mathematics and physical science, the most successful intellectual movement of the eighteenth century. Many Enlightenment philosophers received training in science and mathematics; most revered Newton (without, however, accepting his idea of God), and some made original scientific contributions of their own. It is evident that they attempted to transfer the paradigm of Newtonian science to the realm of history. Just as scientific knowledge was regarded as cumulative and progressive, history, too, was bound to progress; in the same way that scientific discoveries cannot be precisely predicted but can only be regarded as probable improvements, history, too, was defined by an open future in which the forces of reason are ultimately victorious. In the same way that mathematics was taken as the

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foundation of an analysis of the physical world, the categories of universal reason were presupposed for an analysis of history, and categories of natural rights for the critical analysis of politics.

The modernist opposition of past and future also patterned the notion of collective identity. The collective subject of history was understood no longer in terms of a particular person or religious community but as *mankind*. This collective identity of mankind was not an empirical fact or historical reality but a project of the future that served as a categorical construction for a critique of the present. Here again, perfection was located in the future; the impediments to reality were the forces of the past. It was the future, and not the past, that provided the universal categories with which to perceive the contingency of present reality; it was the future, and not the past, that was the frame of reference uniting mankind. The path leading from the disunity and division of the present to the universal unity of mankind was seen to be not one of immediate civic inclusion, but of education. If science and the growth of knowledge represented enlightenment as the central force of history, then education provided the central mode of overcoming ingrained ignorance, thus relating the avant-garde of progress to the backward masses.

Not surprisingly, most Enlightenment intellectuals were categorical cosmopolitans—regardless of whether they traveled widely or never left their Königsberg. This cosmopolitan attitude was especially prominent among French Enlightenment intellectuals, who had to face a well-established nation-state grounded in tradition; a focus on the nation could not transcend a given situation in the name of a future order.

The firm belief in the openness of the future, the malleability of history, and the universality of reason, however, had to cope with the undeniably slow pace of progress, the stubborn resistance of human beings to education, and the limitations placed on perfectibility.

The opposition between past and future was closely related to an increasing differentiation between *nature* and *society*. Nature as investigated by the sciences and codified in eternal laws was also considered a point of reference for history and politics, which were regarded as the realm of error, superstition, contingent decisions, and mundane, narrow-minded interests. Progress

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in history could therefore be defined not only as removing the barriers of the past to the universal order of the future, but also as realizing natural order, natural reason, and natural morality in history and society. Theories of society and political organization usually began by positing a state of nature that—in contrast to both Christian and Hobbesian thinking—was seen as a prelapsarian realm of freedom and reason, an unspoiled paradise in which no divine predestination separated the elected at the center from the damned at the periphery. The whole of mankind was united under the canopy of one nature, and the reigning perspective even shifted from the center to the periphery of the known world, as uncivilized peoples—"noble savages"—were increasingly discovered to be embodiments of natural reason and natural morality.

This sacralization of nature is one of the most striking and consequential results of Enlightenment thinking. The new priests of this sacralized nature were Newtonian scientists and enlightened philosophers, and it is science that was considered the paradigm for the progress of human society in general. The scientific method was to provide access to the truth regardless of the individual applying it; thus the epistemological universality of science presupposed a universal collective identity of mankind.

But it was not only the success of the scientific movement that fostered the sacralization of nature; nature was raised to a symbol of transcendence and salvation in art and literature, and served as a frame for aristocratic play.[6] Enlightenment advocacy of nature in art, literature, and the life of the court did not yet focus on its wild sublimity (characteristic of Romanticism), dwelling instead on the image of a tamed paradise or standardized *locus amoenus*. Even this overt and covert advocacy indicates that the highly differentiated, civilized, and refined culture of the absolutist court tended to imagine a counterpart to itself that could unite the diversity of hierarchies and transcend the contingencies of political life. The court culture of the Enlightenment was so far removed from the everyday experience of a threatening or burdensome outside world that it could reinvent nature as a lost paradise.

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The Public and the Private

A third fundamental opposition that moved and structured Enlightenment discourse was the increasing differentiation between the *public* and the *private*.[7] This differentiation appeared in various fields of culture and politics. Tension between the public position of the monarch and his behavior as a private individual became an issue in gossip and political philosophy; discussion increasingly focused on the general question of how to determine the true personality behind publicly visible behavior. Beyond this, the self was discovered as a realm of sensibility. Letters reporting the personal emotional life of writers became fashionable; diaries made explicit reference to sentiments and feelings; the theater focused on disguise and changing public identities; the novel became the chief literary genre, laying bare the carefully preserved secrecies and intrigues that were now the central motivation of narrative; masks became a favorite accessory in public life; and individual eccentricities were tolerated and cultivated. All these cultural tendencies hint at a differentiation between the passions and sensibilities of private individuals and the social role of public appearances and formal obligations.

This growing separation of the private and the public had political implications. The private opinions, ambitions, and interests of citizens were increasingly viewed as an important but independent and potentially dangerous counterpart to the government—in particular if they were shared by others. Governments, for their own purposes, decided they needed information about this hidden private realm, and maintained a large number of spies on their payroll whose job was to investigate the opinions of private persons by covert means. Reaction to this took many forms. The Masonic societies that spread rapidly throughout Enlightenment Europe maintained strict secrecy in their internal communications in order to protect the free use of reason from the influence of society; *salons* and coffeehouses were set up as informal institutions for private persons. The modern public sphere of journals and newspapers began to emerge as a mediating interface between the private realm of individual citizens and the government. This suggests a dynamic distinct from the new discourse about private sensibilities and passions. Instead of the public display of private feelings and interests being

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encouraged, these were expelled from the realm of public discourse: only universally acceptable arguments were admitted to politics, science, and philosophy. The *philosophes* considered the intrusion into politics of private idiosyncratic motivations the ultimate scandal.

But this expulsion of private motives from the level of public politics indicates only the strict differentiation between the public and the private; it did not mean suppression of the private realm. On the contrary, in its own right and on the proper level, it was supposed to unfold and be submitted to its own dynamic. Mandeville's "private vices–public benefits" marked the separation of these realms in terms of a paradoxical relationship. Public and private could not be united under a shared moral orientation, and it was precisely this inconsistency that allowed both levels to progress and flourish. The new autonomy of the private sphere can also be found in the Enlightenment's praise of passions and desires, which were considered to be natural and vital drives. Diderot admired the sexual freedoms enjoyed by the Tahitians. The novels of the Marquis de Sade took this praise of private passions even further: if private life was set free from public morals it could be submitted to the individual exploration of new forms of pleasure, completely uncoupled from the approval of others. On the basis of this separation between the public and the private realm, the intellectuals of the Enlightenment were constrained to promote strict universalism and moral rigor in public discourse, even if, on numerous occasions, their private conduct stood in contradiction to their publicly held principles. Voltaire is the most famous illustration of this hypocritical tendency, which seems not to have caused any problems for the French Enlightenment. A critic of the king and of censorship, he was at the same time a spy in the pay of the French government. He crusaded against the church *pour l'écraser l'infame* but expected his servants and his wife to believe in *un dieu rémunérateur et vengeur.* The unfailing public advocate of *la raison* and relentless opponent of superstition, Voltaire even praised the lie as a virtue: "A lie is a vice only when it does harm. It is a great virtue when it does good. . . . You must lie like a devil, not timidly, but boldly and persistently."[8] Here the paradoxical relationship between the public and the private realm

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is brought out very clearly: a falsehood will assume the valence of a truth when shifted to the public realm; the private vice of the intellectual turns out to be beneficial to public morality. Hypocrisy provides a bridge between these levels; Hegel's cunning of reason is clearly drawing on an idea of the French Enlightenment. Without the obligation to put universal principles to the test in the speaker's private life, Enlightenment discourse was increasingly able to engage in radical zeal and rigorous criticism. A gap opened between the ideal of a public ordered by reason and the real world of private vices, lies, deception, and illusion, producing a special version of the tension typical of axial ages. This contradictory relationship between the individual and the private realm, on the one hand, and the state and the public realm, on the other, could be transformed into a special notion of politics, whereby the latter was not considered a field of tension between actors on an equal footing, struggling for support and dominance and finally reaching a compromise. Instead, it was conceived as a conflict between different levels—revolutionary individual and repressive state, corrupt private interests and public morality.

PATRIOTISM AND THE IMAGINATION OF AN INVISIBLE AUDIENCE: THE GERMAN AUFKLÄRUNG

The German Enlightenment differed from *les lumières* in several important respects. In contrast to France (but also to England and Scotland), the political map of Germany was made up of a multitude of cities, small princely states, and a handful of larger territorial units, most notably Prussia. The absence of a nation-state had a far-reaching impact on the German construction of the public sphere. In France, England, and even Scotland, Enlightenment intellectuals could orient their perspective towards a central political authority—the monarch, the state, the capital—whereas in Germany they could not. Certainly, the enlightened absolutism of Prussia's Frederick II was widely admired and recognized as a paradigm of a modern and enlightened monarchy, but Berlin was not a capital city matching the importance of London or Paris as a center of urban social life, and Frederick despised German culture and the German tongue ("A language

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for horses and soldiers"). The poor German princes in their small residential towns tried to imitate the splendor of Versailles by constructing *Schlösser* and supporting the arts, but they could not hope to succeed in establishing an intellectual life at their court that could attract the most brilliant German intellectuals in the same way Paris had been able to do. The cultural importance of Weimar at the end of the century contrasted strikingly with its political insignificance.

But this polycentric structure had some remarkable advantages for the institutions of culture and science. In their attempt to copy the model of French absolutism, many German princes also founded academies of sciences and the arts, universities, and special schools for the training of civil servants. These cultural activities were enhanced by competition between the German principalities, and the result—in terms of the sheer number of positions established in academies and universities, and the number of grants, stipends, and sponsorships awarded—far exceeded comparable numbers in France or in Britain.

Censorship did not work in the German situation—even if a book was banned within a small territorial unit, it could be published across the border and read by a large German-speaking public. Cultural communication extended far beyond the narrow boundaries of traditional princely rule. Thus, the institutional conditions for cultural production were specially favorable in Germany. Also, the audience for Enlightenment literature was relatively larger in Germany than in France and England. At least in the last decades of the century, the figures for literacy and ownership of books are notably higher in north Germany than in France.[9]

The Bildungsbürger

This highly developed audience, and the reading revolution in Germany in the second half of the century, was epitomized by the new class of *Bildungsbürger,* a product of the modernizing efforts of absolutist princes in Germany.[10] Membership in the *Bildungsbürgertum* was based not on descent but on educational achievement, professional expertise, and a particular relationship to the state. Most *Bildungsbürger* in the eighteenth century acquired their professional position as a professor, officer, engi-

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neer, public servant, or magistrate by state appointment, and accordingly they identified themselves strongly with the new institutions of enlightened absolutism—science, the impersonal rule of law, the central administration of public affairs.

In at least two respects, the German *Bildungsbürgertum* differs from its French counterpart: in their geographical situation and in their relationship to the nobility and the court. German *Beamte*—officers, magistrates, and ministers of religion—usually gained their first appointment far from both their local origins and from the place of residence where they had received their training. In the small German cities it was difficult to be accepted by the narrow-minded local bourgeoisie, who operated in accordance with the standards of a fair price and traditional decency and were suspicious of any innovation; the relationship of professionals to the uneducated local commercial class was consequently defined by distance and contempt.

The contrast between the local and traditional *Bürgertum* representing the old *ständische Gesellschaft* and the new class representing the modernizing tendencies of the absolutist state became the chief factor of dichotomy in the German Enlightenment. The distinction between aristocracy and bourgeoisie receded into the background in the face of this split between tradition and Enlightenment values. Indeed, this nascent social tension replaced the opposition between the Enlightenment and the church, which was so prominent in France.

In confronting the traditional local society as its main adversary, however, the German *Bildungsbürgertum* could hardly be said to harbor aspirations to inclusion in the princely court. The social life of the smaller residential courts was quite limited and lacked the attractiveness and splendor of the large capital cities. Trained in the abstract disciplines of law, mathematics, and administration, the new class aimed at a horizon of communication extending far beyond the narrow-minded traditions of the local people and the gossip of the residential towns.

Patterns of Associational Life

The *Bildungsbürger* thus had to develop their own institutions and forms of communication.[11] The patterns of *associational life* that emerged in the German Enlightenment were influenced to a

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certain degree by the French *salons* and their modes of intellectual communication, but they underwent a typically German transformation. For example, the reading associations and clubs that spread rapidly during the second half of the century typically had formal constitutions and were frequently bound by rules of procedure. In contrast to the French *salons,* but like the English clubs, they did not accept women as members and were mostly closed to craftsmen and small shopkeepers (but open to members of the nobility). Because the distinction between members and outsiders was clearly marked, they were not accountable to external scrutiny and could even insist on secrecy; freemasonry was frequently regarded as a model, and the secret order of the Illuminati increased its exclusiveness by elaborately clandestine rituals.[12]

The style of conversation in these reading associations and in the *patriotische Vereinigungen* (patriotic associations) also differed from that of the *salons* of the French Enlightenment or the coffeehouses of the English. Irony and elegant ambivalence were replaced by direct commitment and mutual stimulus with regard to moral ideals. Here, self-realization was not achieved by constructing a distance from official rules but by showing excellence in the pursuit of moral perfection. Contingent differences between individuals were to be disregarded; criticism and the expression of doubt were regarded as misplaced endeavor. The contrafactual construction of moral consensus and the common good was held up as the only worthy guiding principle of good conversation.

The *Bildungsbürger* communicated with each other via the print media, reading journals and responding to articles by writing their own. The differentiation between writer and reader was even less developed than in France or in England. Many *Bildungsbürger* were occasional authors, though few German writers before Goethe were able to live comfortably from the sale of their books, plays, or articles.[13] Articles were frequently signed in an impersonal way (e.g., "A Patriot," "A Well-Wisher")—not to escape the censor, but to show disregard for misplaced personal or private involvement. The new community of readers and writers thus extended far beyond the borders of the small German principalities and included a large audience based on

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the German language and the culture of the Enlightenment.[14] This invisible audience was conceived of as the *deutsche Nation,* and the writers addressing its members, as German *patriots.*[15] This new German patriotism was rooted in a strong moral emphasis; no irony or playful paradox was allowed to weaken the construction of an "invisible community of hearts and spirits."[16] The German language provided the cultural foundation for this patriotic public; the new writers and readers despised the French orientation of the German courts, attacked the unnatural and rigid rules of French classicism, and turned to England and Shakespearean drama as a new model for a German national theater. In contrast to the intellectuals of the French Enlightenment, who had to transcend the existing nation-state by appealing to mankind, their German counterparts constructed an imagined cultural nation that, in its turn, also transcended existing political boundaries.

Bildung *as the Basis of the German Nation*

In constructing the nation as an educated readership, German patriots modified the universalistic codes of the French Enlightenment. The German version of constructing an opposition between *les anciens* and *les modernes* did not address the power of the church; instead, it centered mainly on the conflict between *Ständische Gesellschaft* and the project of enlightened absolutism. Personal and group privileges were attacked in the name of impersonal principles; reason and virtue were to be the basis of the new state; extravagance and frivolity were to be banned from private and public life.

The quest for moral perfection was not the sole preserve of the public realm, but also involved the conduct of private life. The German Enlightenment viewed the split between public and private as a problem, rather than as a separation of autonomous realms. This attitude could result in paradoxical relationships. The discovery of the inner reality of the individual engendered conflict with the traditional social order of the *ständische Gesellschaft*; the vocation of this inner self sought realization in public life, and the aim of rational general legislation was to orient and control the inner motives of individuals. Although the two realms were seen as drifting apart, the German Enlighten-

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ment aimed at their reconciliation. Public morality, it was felt, should be in accord with individual virtue; political rationality was to emerge from the education of individual citizens (who were to show devotion to the common good), while the role of the state was to support the resulting benefits to these individual citizens. Such perverse effects as "private vices–public benefits" were hard to imagine within the framework of the German Enlightenment, and irony provided no path to self-realization at a distance from an adverse social reality. Instead, a strong belief prevailed in the direct public benefits of individual morality and virtue. In contrast to the French model of separation between the public and the private realm, the German Enlightenment insisted that the transcendental order of morality and reason should shape and guide not only the public domain but also the private lives of individual citizens. Only insofar as they realized the virtues of Enlightenment in their private lives could citizens claim the right to participate in the public sphere.

The focus in the German Enlightenment on individual virtue was strongly aligned with Protestant ideas of salvation, in particular from the Lutheran and Pietist heritage, with its focus on self-control and moral education.[17] Its urge toward reconciliation between the public and the private realm was also supported by the particular degree with which enlightened universalism was embedded in a patriotic German identity, as well as by the German notion of *Bildung*. The French version of enlightened universalism linked the public realm to existing political institutions (i.e., the French state), which were criticized and framed by means of an all-encompassing reference to humankind. In the German case, this relationship between humankind, the state, and the individual is replaced by a connection between the German nation and its embodiment in the individual. This relation between individual and culture can hardly be viewed as contradiction, opposition, or conflict; it is fundamentally bound up with mutual accord and correspondence. This sense of correspondence lies at the core of the special German notion of *Bildung*. We can imagine revolts against authority and state, but it is hard to conceive of a revolt against the culture to which one belongs and that patterns one's perception of the world.

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Natural Morality and Moralized Nature

The inner reality of the individual was originally formulated in religious terms. By the end of the eighteenth century, however, it was increasingly secularized and defined as *natural*—natural morality, natural reason, and, later on, even the natural genius of the individual, who was repressed by the artificial rules of society and forced to emancipate himself from self-induced serfdom. It was less common than in the French Enlightenment for German intellectuals to involve the material basis of the equality and homogeneity of men in their references to nature; instead, nature was invoked to underscore man's inalienable individuality and identity.

The unspoiled common sense of plain citizens was praised in contrast to the artificial *courteoisie* of the nobility. This contrast between the natural simplicity of the *bürgerliche* world and the decadence and inauthenticity of the aristocratic lifestyle was marked in Germany and relatively weak in France. The German *Bildungsbürger* succeeded in presenting their own world as the moral and cultural center of the nation, whereas the French Enlightenment was oriented to the court and its aristocratic mode of conversation. This naturalization of the life-world of the *Bildungsbürger* blended opposition of the alleged superficiality of French culture with opposition to the artificiality and immorality of the princely court to produce a strong cultural construction of German identity. "Being natural" later on even became an explicit ideal of communication among the German *Bildungsbürgertum*—an ideal that required special effort and education. This natural simplicity—since morality represented the backbone of German patriotism—was profoundly moralized. In their self-assured morality, German patriots viewed their own nation as taking the lead in the progress of Enlightenment, whereas the French state was seen as despotic—at least compared with the rule of Frederick II. Faced with the onset of the French Revolution, German patriots could even regard it as an inevitable acceleration of history designed to allow the French to catch up with the Germans. The French Revolution, however, profoundly changed the coding of the tension between public and private in France as well as in Germany. New cultural rifts entered the public arena; new rituals of discourse gained primacy.

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LES AMIS DU PEUPLE: THE PUBLIC SPACE OF THE JACOBINS

The beginnings of the French Revolution continued the project of enlightened absolutism with its now-familiar conflicts. It was triggered by fiscal problems and by the opposition of the *parlements*. The old order of traditional privileges was abolished, and the enlightened form of constitutional government that had permeated the administration finally sat firmly in the saddle of politics, with the "Brissotins" in the Assemblée Nationale representing the notables, the carrier group of Enlightenment ideas.[18] The monarchy as such was not yet seriously challenged. In collecting the famous *cahiers de doléances* for the Assemblée Nationale in 1789, however, the lower ranks of the Third Estate, the *petit bourgeoisie* and the rural population, were given a voice in official politics.

Crowds, Space, and Power

A few years later, in 1793, with the advent of the *sans-culottes* and the Comité du Salut Publique, the lower ranks dominated politics and redefined the public sphere. That sphere was no longer an arena of deliberation to which only those privileged by education were admitted. Now it was constituted by the streets and urban spaces where people could gather for collective action. Although the conceptual references of the Enlightenment—*raison, vertu, le bien publique*—were constantly employed, forms of communication changed profoundly. The core of public communication shifted from intellectual conversation in *salons* to public addresses to the people and mass rallies, from cosmopolitan essays and novels to political pamphlets and journal articles indicting the manipulations of an invisible public enemy. In this new public space of the people, communication was focused on the mobilization of urban masses for collective action.[19] Paris received a considerable influx of the impoverished rural population at the end of the eighteenth century, and these uprooted and largely unemployed groups joined the journeymen and small artisans, laborers and marketwomen, wine merchants and petty traders to form a crowd in the public space ready to be mobilized by new political leaders. In the densely populated quarters, rumors could spread rapidly, and crowds could spring up and

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surge easily.[20] What was previously the despised populace now became a major political force.

The political rhetoric of the Revolution responded quickly to this shift. After the seizure of the Bastille, political power was increasingly defined as enlisting the support of the people, channeling their anger, and centering their revolutionary attention on the unlucky ones who were accused of being enemies of the people. In contrast to the conversation of the Enlightenment *salons,* this public address to the people was obliged not to produce entertainment and variety but to construct a strong ritual consensus between speaker and audience. These public addresses were no longer moved by deliberation and the search for intellectual pleasure, by agile argument and displays of erudition uncoupled from any direct pressure to make decisions and exert power. Instead, the forging of unity and the construction of a collective urge to action were the focal problem. Considering the heterogeneity of the revolutionary crowds and the fragility of the new ties between revolutionary leaders and their followers, the production of a collective will was indeed the critical core of interaction.

Even more important, however, was the inclusive, open character of the crowd itself. Crowds have no clear and stable demarcation; their fringes are diffuse and constantly shifting. The process of building a crowd accelerates, but so does the process of its dissolution. Because belonging to a crowd is dependent not on stable membership and accountable commitment but on chance presence and voluntary action, communication must be strongly inclusive if it is to attract almost everyone present in the locality. Constructing the collective identity of a crowd therefore cannot rely solely on sheer presence in a locality; it must be supported by universalistic and inclusive codings capable of blurring the internal social heterogeneity of the crowd. In the public addresses of the French Revolution this was mainly achieved by such public rituals as singing, marching, and rallying, along with the rhetorical staging of charismatized notions such as "*citoyen,*" "*patriote,*" and, above all, "*nation.*" Originally, "*la nation*" as well as "*citoyen*" were universalistic codes of collective identity that included everyone on an egalitarian basis; foreigners like the German Anarcharsis Clooth and even such enemies as the king were addressed as "*citoyen.*"

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Public Action and Collective Identity

Corresponding to the exigencies of communication in a crowd, collective identity was constructed in action. The French nation was imagined in terms of mobilized people gathered in the public spaces and agitated by fresh waves of intellectuals like Marat, Robespierre, Roux, Varlet, Jean Pache, and Hébert. These new populist leaders were usually of petit-bourgeois origin, frequently lawyers in the lower courts or journalists without great professional success before the Revolution. The new political class was decidedly different from the founding generation of the Enlightenment.[21] The *noblesse de robe* largely disappeared from political life after 1792. Not only were local tradesmen and schoolmasters, artisans, and innkeepers now included, but also those from religious minorities, outsiders, and refugees; many members of the Jacobin clubs were migrants uncoupled from their local origins, looking for new horizons and modes of communication. Their leaders were politically inexperienced—frequently very young men who ascended to importance through political election instead of by virtue of education, intellectual wit, or professional career. Sometimes they had already tried in vain to be admitted to respected *salons* and intellectual clubs (Marat, for example). Their marginal and mobilized position not only fostered new perspectives but also constituted an intermediate position between the provincial electorate and the metropolitan government in Paris.

The Jacobin intellectuals were no longer *honnêtes hommes* but *pédants*. They insisted on an undiluted, direct, and accurate realization of universalistic principles. The enemies of the people had to be judged and executed without mercy or rancor. Although the rhetoric of the populist intellectuals continued the tradition of the Enlightenment (in the exchange of *thèse* and *critique*), debate on controversial positions was mostly confined to the internal communications of clubs and committees. Even in these special spaces every communication was under strong pressure to attack the enemy beyond and was at high risk if the position suggested failed to win majority support. Thus the notion of a strong, demonic enemy was at the core of Revolutionary communication. This not only obtained with respect to communication within the clubs and political assemblies but for

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the construction of collective action in public spaces as well. The crowds were extremely sensitive to fluctuations in food prices and could easily be mobilized to attack anybody who seemed to be responsible for shortages or a rise in grain prices.

The idea of a strong demonic threat from outside and the construction of a strong collective identity among the people found correlations in the oppositions of past and future, nature and society, private and public. The people were depicted as the true and unspoiled natural force fighting an artificial, decadent, parasitic, and repressive enemy. As in the Enlightenment, the Jacobin perspective sacralized nature as the savage, uncivilized realm at the periphery of society—but the horizontal tension between center and exotic periphery was now converted into a vertical one and resolved by direct and violent action. The old order of the center was to be destroyed by revolutionary violence and replaced by the natural will of the people. Nature was not only associated with the periphery but also with the dynamic of change and the expression of uninhibited passions and violence. It represented less the timeless order than the forces moving history. This dynamization of nature profoundly changed the relationship between nature and society: the tension between nature and society was not preserved as a dialectical opposition or as a reconciliation between the two realms but as nature's violent incursion into the very center of society. The question of who belonged to the people and who was to be treated as its enemy was not decided by primordial criteria (although later on foreigners were increasingly excluded) but by *participation* in successful collective action in the public space. Outsiders were outsiders not because they were naturally different but because they lacked the natural impulse and represented an artificial society. Thus the power of the people was linked not only to nature but also to the future and the public realm. The violence of the people was sacralized because it accelerated history and represented the future finally triumphant over the forces of the past. But this close linkage between collective identity and the future success of actions also opened up a field of uncertainty and risk; awareness of this uncertainty was converted into a challenge to accelerate revolutionary action, to forge a strong unity of collective action, and to repress political opposition.

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Political opponents were no longer considered players in a game but a direct threat to the common good and a challenge to the order of reason and virtue. They had to be exterminated without personal emotion, passion, or mercy in order to save the future from the past and the public from the private. Jacobin discourse established a tight connection between the universal order of reason and virtue and daily political struggles: the impersonal universal order was no longer seen as a transcendental or categorical presupposition but as a blueprint for direct revolutionary action. It could be realized only if its opposite—personal, mundane reality; political cleavage; conflict between political parties; the existence of political adversaries—was eliminated. The very existence of politics, of private interests and bargaining, was considered a sign of a corrupt society. Here the private was redefined as the realm of political conflict. In a Jacobin perspective, the axial-age tension between the transcendental order of reason, unity, and perfection and the mundane realm of personal rule, political interests, and conflicts had to be resolved by expunging the mundane level.

The French model of relating the public to the private had established a path that did not allow for balanced coexistence or harmonious reconciliation; it demanded radical solutions. Because the tension between the public and the private could not be relieved by compromise and mediation, the center had to be purged of private interests and reconstructed from a state of nature established by the presocial violence of the Revolution. Hence the king had to be decapitated, as he represented the past, the personal, and the unnatural order. At the end, *la nation une et indivisible* was to emerge, the perfect realization of the new collective subject of history.

THE SUBLIME ESSENCE: THE AESTHETIC NATIONALISM OF THE GERMAN ROMANTICS

At the beginning, the French Revolution attracted some enthusiastic followers in Germany, but occupation by French troops and the Napoleonic Empire turned most German patriots into opponents of the French revolutionary project. Prussia was defeated and the German princes became vassals of the French

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Emperor. A new generation of German intellectuals, aspiring to the prestige of the leading poets Goethe and Schiller and attracted by the prospect of academic careers and literary fame, had to face a serious crisis of academic institutions.[22] University enrollment declined sharply at the turn of the century, the generous patronage of the German princes receded, and an increasing number of young intellectuals with high cultural ambitions had to accept modest positions as private teachers in the households of well-off bourgeois or noble families.[23]

Uprooted Intellectuals and Esthetic Distinction

Scattered all over the country and separated from other like-minded thinkers, most intellectuals lived a lonely life in the small cities of the German provinces. This inferior position contrasted sharply with their sense of self-respect, their education and intellectual ambitions, and frequently also their experience. It is no surprise that most despised the bourgeois world of money, administration, and professional narrow-mindedness. In this situation, a new heterodoxy, Romanticism, which continued and radicalized ideas available in late-eighteenth-century Europe, took over the young and ambitious German intellectuals as it did their contemporaries in other European countries.

The early German Romantics continued the division between *Bildungsbürgertum* and traditional bourgeoisie, but they also included civil servants and the political institution of enlightened absolutism in their contempt. Patriotic faith in reason and virtue was considered to be simplistic and naïve, a modern version of bourgeois narrow-mindedness.[24]

In facing the challenge of Goethe and Schiller, the new literary movement of Romanticism chose to despise the broad public and to construct their own distinctiveness by assuming esoteric attitudes. Notwithstanding their modest situation in the bourgeois world, they thought themselves endowed with a superior perspective on the essence of things; they reached out for a new and deeper foundation of identity beyond the narrow-minded world of mercantilism and professional success.

Esoteric Cliques and the Infinite Longing

The literature of the rising Romantic intellectuals was not published in the broader patriotic press but in special journals that,

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while cherishing high ambitions, were usually short-lived and had an extremely restricted circulation. Intellectuals and their public were now differentiated, with more ambitious literary ventures being directed at other authors and kept separate from trivial literature designed for the broader public. Thus the public sphere of the Enlightenment was replaced by esoteric inner circles that developed their own patterns of communication and social life, transcending the banalities of everyday reality and focusing on an inner core—a clique sustained by personal sympathy and infinite feeling.[25] The programmatic obligation to esoteric and demanding forms of discourse conveyed an exclusive and superior self-image and offered opportunities to detach oneself from mundane existence—that is, from the public sphere, the world of money and politics. Irony could produce this distance; philosophical discourse could penetrate the banal surface; and surrender to the infinity of romantic love could transcend the barriers of locality, rationality, and morality. Reason and morality appeared to be too superficial and straightforward to provide a foundation for communication. Below the idle surface there was a deeper and unspeakable reality that escaped ordinary perspectives and remained untouched by common notions—the abyss of individuality, nature, and love. Against finite and mundane interests, an infinite and extraordinary reality—art—had to be maintained. Art was thought to be able to break through the barriers of banality, to offer a path to individuality and insight, and to provide an imperishable point of reference uniting and synthesizing fragmented reality.

Romanticism, however, did not conceive of art in terms of classical aesthetics. Instead, art was viewed as a sublime ground that could not be approached by ordinary concepts—an unspeakable and alienable reality, which by virtue of its very transcendence was exempted from alienation, imitation, and argumentation.[26]

The German Kulturnation

In its focus on individuality and nature, the Romantic movement partially continued the rhetoric of the Enlightenment; but the meaning of the concepts employed was shifted by a new form of exocentric communication. The realm of universal morality and

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reason was branded mundane and banal, to be replaced by new references to transcendence—"religion" (Schleiermacher), "absolute poetry" (Novalis), "Romantic irony" (Schlegel). This lurch toward exocentric (and eccentric) perspectives was fostered by a mismatch between the new political situation and the established German model for relating the public to the private. The German Enlightenment model required a harmonious blending of both realms; this integration of public and private, however, was impeded by the existence of a widening gap between public politics under French occupation and the social marginalization of the new writers. There was no hope of bridging this gap and balancing the relationship between the two levels. The German Romantics coped with this situation by excluding the official public sphere from their program for reconciliation and harmony. Official politics was disdained as the realm of banality, whereas private individuality was revered as the sublime essence. A similar reversal can be observed with respect to the opposition between past and future: the Romantics praised the splendor of a lost past (the Middle Ages) and tried to reconstruct and preserve traditions in the pursuit of individuality, authenticity, and originality. The meaning of nature, too, was radically different from the French Enlightenment idea of the universal comparability of material objects. In a Romantic context, nature referred to infinity, continuity, and uniqueness and was contrasted with the artificial dissecting activities of modern society.

But to gaze into the abyss of unending individuality is also to risk the end of communication. The Romantics thus had to replace the realm of public politics with a new set of references that could provide an inalienable basis for intersubjectivity and collective identity: *das Volk*. The Romantic idea of *Volk* and nation referred to a transcendental horizon of understanding and communication, thus replacing the cosmopolitanism of the Enlightenment with a particular national community. Imagining this transcendent nation allowed for a special and intimate merging of private and public, the individual and the collective realm, as required by the German model. The nation was regarded as the sublime and ultimate collective individual of historical action, and the individual could understand his or her own self only with reference to the collective identity of the nation. This na-

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tion is unique and sets limits to understanding and identification; its individuality cannot be compared and communicated on a general level. Because the individual essences of nations were exempted from ordinary and mundane communication, only art could provide a way of approaching the charismatic core, and poets assumed the function of the priests of this sacralized nation.

This merging of the individual and the collective realm was supported by remarkable parallels between national and personal identity. In the same way that the economic situation of the Romantic intellectuals failed to match their education and intellectual ambitions, the political situation of the small German states did not correspond to the importance of Germany as a *Kulturnation*. Just as the identity of intellectuals was constituted by their education and by their distance from the realm of money and official careers, German national identity was to be based not on the particularities of political and economic interests but on the universalism of art and culture. In the case of both the nation and the genius, sublime individuality could not be copied or imitated; for both, visible reality was fragmented, and only unusual esoteric perspectives were seen to open up a path to a deeper and imperishable grounding of identity beyond the surface of idle talk and vain affairs.

In French Jacobinism as well as in German Romanticism, public politics and individuality were irreconcilable spheres separated by a gap that could be bridged only on exceptional occasions or by violent collective action. The war of liberation against French military occupation represented such an occasion for transcending this boundary. In the insurrection against the French emperor, the Romantic idea of the nation was disseminated beyond the confines of the intellectual ghetto and used to mobilize large sectors of north German youth. The face of war changed in ways anticipated by the French revolutionary armies. The individual soldier participated in the war of liberation not through coercion and submission but through conviction and voluntary decision: in this respect, Jacobinism and Romanticism had established similar and complementary modes of erasing through collective violence the difference between the private and the public.

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CONCLUSION

The four scenarios discussed here show a certain similarity on the level of cultural codes and oppositions: Both the French and the German Enlightenment, as both Jacobin populism and Romantic aestheticism, were based on the axial-age tension between a mundane and a transcendent realm. In secularized Western cultures this tension has been constructed as an opposition between past and future, nature and society, private and public (or individual and society). The special phrasings of these oppositions and their tentative resolution, however, differ strongly depending on the structural situation of the dominant intellectual group and its basic pattern of communication; even parallel movements that have more in common than merely the same temporal setting—like the examples considered here—evince these differences. The opposition between private (individual) and public (society) was constructed as separate and autonomous levels by the French Enlightenment, whereas German patriotism tried to reconcile both realms through the individual internalization of moral principles. The populism of the Jacobin intellectuals bypassed the tension, erasing the private realm by revolutionary violence; whereas Romantic intellectuals viewed the gap between these levels as unbridgeable, denouncing the banality of public life and revering the sublimity of the collective individual. Similar differences could be stated with respect to the phrasing of history and nature. The different moldings of the basic oppositions also gave way to different notions of collective identity; all such constructions—the enlightened humankind of the French *philosophes,* the invisible nation of German patriots, *la nation une et indivisible* of the French Jacobins, even certain aspects of the Romantic idea of the *Volk*—were based on the principle of universalism and aimed at a public audience. Against this historical background, however, the idea of an open and inclusive community appears neither as a categorical presupposition of any good and just society nor as a cultural peculiarity of Western civilization. Instead, it seems to be the result of an appropriate encoding of public communication.

Public communication is by principle dependent on a universalist construction of collective identity, and universalistic iden-

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tities will emerge only in the context of public communication. However, this birth of universalism from the spirit of public communication never occurs in a pure and undiluted way; it is patterned by the particular historical situation giving rise to a public sphere. When we appeal to everybody—humankind, the inclusive community of the future—this universal community has no face we can address. Hence, historical forms of universalistic identity are never perfectly inclusive. They rarely live up to their own aspirations and mostly engender exclusions that are never mentioned or debated. The humankind of the Enlightenment, for example, included only the educated and economically independent citizens of Europe. Obviously, it is hard to bridge the gap between the categorical presupposition of universal inclusion and its practical realization in everyday life. Acknowledging the reality of this chasm may bring about, as with the Romantics, a complete retreat from public activities into the privacy of friendship and the exaltation of art, music, and literature. Such a stance touched on ordinary politics and power only in an ironic and contemptuous way; only on exceptional occasions when the fate of the nation was at stake would they enter the political arena. This combination of apolitical privacy and political romanticism can give way to precarious historical developments.

Disquieting scenarios may, however, also result from the opposite reaction to the gap between categorical universalism in the public sphere and its practical realization. If the universalism of the public sphere is turned radically into praxis, every act of resistance on the part of outsiders not only puts the inclusion of an individual at risk but also challenges the entire mission of inclusion. Outsiders cannot resist inclusion, neither by right nor by reason. Whoever questions the mission has to be overwhelmed and destroyed. The terror of the Jacobins is certainly a remarkable and early (but by no means unique) attempt at radical universalistic inclusion by erasing the private in the name of the public. But other attempts followed, surpassing the Jacobins in ruthlessness and effectivity.

All these different modes of coping with the tension emerged in particular national settings and reveal the distinct colorations of those settings. But they can be understood only within a

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European frame of references and resonances, and they contributed to a global repertoire of codes for the construction of collective identity.

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Víctor Pérez-Díaz

State and Public Sphere in Spain during the Ancient Regime

THE CHARACTER OF THE STATE AND OF POLITICS

BETWEEN THE SIXTEENTH AND THE EIGHTEENTH centuries, the Spanish state followed a path marked by the largely unexpected consequences of a sequence of challenges and choices. Spain's public sphere can be understood as an ongoing conversation between the political elites who made the choices and the cultural elites who, with a mixture of support and detachment, understanding and criticism, helped to define those challenges and to make those choices. Two topics underlay that conversation: the character of the state and politics, and the construction of a political community.

The trajectory of the Spanish state and its public sphere may be better understood if we examine it through the prism of a contrast between two ideal types of states—a "nomocratic" model and a "teleocratic" model, in Michael Oakeshott's terms.[1] In its ideal-typical form, the nomocratic state limits itself to providing society with *tranquillitas et iustitia,* does not pretend to be the bearer of historic missions, and requires a relatively modest apparatus. By contrast, the teleocratic state places society in a subordinate position; views it as a sphere in which resources are generated to be used by the rulers to fulfill its missions, be they religious or temporal (such as their subjects' salvation, moral growth or material prosperity); and tends to create a powerful apparatus with which to achieve its aims. Oakeshott's further distinction between a politics of faith and a politics of skepticism parallels that between the teleocratic

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and the nomocratic states.[2] The nomocratic state fosters a politics of reduced expectations and discourages extraordinary deference to the symbols and institutions of the state on the part of its subjects. Conversely, a teleocratic state promotes a politics of faith, nurtures its subjects' disposition to place high hopes in the state's activities, and encourages an exalted view of the state's position in public imagery.

In Spain, an absolute monarchy (which may be regarded as the key piece in a teleocratic order) began to take shape late in the fifteenth century, gathered momentum under the Hapsburgs during the period of Spanish hegemony in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and was redefined and given new impetus under the Bourbons in the next century. However, on closer examination, an undertow running in the opposite direction can be discerned. Though the Hapsburgs largely respected the socioeconomic order they found in place and went along with the constitutional tradition of the medieval state they inherited, they were committed to some collective goals that required systematic intervention in the social fabric. They took significant steps towards reinforcing the sovereign's authority and developing a politics of faith by redefining the meaning of the medieval tradition of reconquest.

The Hapsburg state accumulated and mobilized resources for defending the Catholic faith and molding the moral character of its subjects, making membership in the church the key to acceptance in the political community. The establishment of the Inquisition, the expulsion of the Jews, and the segregation of the *Moriscos* all were portrayed as continuing in a tradition aimed at the creation of a homogeneous religious community. The kings forced their subjects to conform, undergo punishment, go into exile, and silence their convictions. This put an end to an intermittent tradition of some eight centuries of reconquest that had accommodated a complex relationship between the communities of the three religions of the book, wherein frequent contacts and prolonged phases of peaceful coexistence and tolerance alternated with war.[3] By engaging in a strategy of indoctrination and thought-police, the monarchy aspired to legitimize itself not only as the guarantor of justice and peace but also as an instrument of the moral perfection of society.

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Though those practices of intimidation had a lasting effect—creating a teleocratic discourse of sorts that dominated the artistic culture of the Golden Age—the public sphere included other currents of opinion. While never daring to oppose the kings' grand strategy, the circles of Erasmians and the School of Salamanca, and such writers as Cervantes, the Baroque moralists, and the *arbitristas*, regarded with distance and critical comment the rationale and feasibility of the royal missions.

Ironically, the very success of the politics of faith in persuading people to raise their expectations of the state laid the ground for its later ruin. Spaniards became accustomed to the idea that their princes were the bearers of extraordinary missions. They expected that such missions would be carried out, and were prepared to withstand failure only within limits. The depth and duration of the monarchy's failure tested their confidence. An overstretched politics of faith left room for doubt, and doubt eventually gave way to the melancholy that prevailed for much of the seventeenth century.

The turn of the century brought a new dynasty and a redefinition of the state. The Bourbons tried to restore the high expectations associated with the state by changing the grounds of politics. They revised their relationship with the church, reduced the intensity of their commitment as defenders of religion and attempted a (partial) secularization of the state. Appealing to a reason of state understood to apply to the welfare of society, they proposed that a temporal goal would bind together the enhancement of royal power and the prosperity of the kingdom. There was an ambiguity, however, in the Bourbons' message. The state exalted the figure of the absolute ruler, and state policy was a privileged instrument for achieving economic progress, social stability (leaving the Estates untouched), and the civilization of customs. At the same time, the king's subjects were encouraged to act on their own and to foster their own interests, with the state helping in the education of its subjects and removing obstacles to the free play of economic agents. As the state affirmed (within limits) its commitment to promoting economic prosperity and some kind of education consistent with that aim, it provided a modest impetus to experiments with open markets and with a secular and

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rational education that might develop public discussion and civic engagement—two basic tenets of a nomocratic order. This ambiguity underlied the conversation between the political elites and the *ilustrados*, the men of the Enlightenment.

At the same time, as Spain moved away from a project of imperial rule couched in a language of universal values politics soon became articulated in the language of particularism, centering on matters of national interest. The key to this transition was the (partial) development of a political community aware of its own identity and the need to defend its unique interests on the world scene, knowing that this particularity was based less on a common religious faith than on its attachment to specific political institutions and a delimited territory.

Ultimately, the definition of peninsular Spain as the appropriate territory for a political community came at the end of a transition from empire to regional power on its way to a nation-state. The monarchy had the kingdom of Castile as its nucleus and preferred instrument but was never reduced to it. The Hapsburgs offered to the Castilian privileged orders a compromise: Castilians would give low priority to their local interests in exchange for playing a central role in the empire. Though this fueled centrifugal tendencies in other parts of Spain, the very crisis of the empire in the seventeenth century provided the basis for a Spanish nation-state. The separation of Portugal settled once and for all an ambiguity in the relations between Portugal and Castile. The unpleasant experience of Catalonia with its ally-cum-invader, France, at the time of its attempted secession in the mid-seventeenth century had the unexpected effect of the Catalans making a sober appraisal of what dependence on France could really mean. This became the basis of an improved coexistence with the rest of Spain in the next century, particularly as it coincided with demographic and (especially) economic improvements encompassing significant steps towards creating a unified market in the peninsula and opening the American market to Spaniards of all regions.

A modicum of national sentiment resulted and, led by the *ilustrados*, a general public comprised of people throughout Spain gradually emerged. Although they engaged for decades in a conversation focused on the ways to solve institutional and

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cultural problems at the root of Spain's decline and eventual recovery, the final impulse for the formation of a political community did not take place until the next century. As the country went through the War of Independence, the main cleavages between the Estates collapsed and the Spaniards discovered a strong community of feeling in their opposition to the French invaders. This crucial formative experience in the development of the Spanish political community, reinforced by the vagaries of war, made people focus their attention on the peninsula and leave aside the question of what might happen to the colonies.

THE SPANISH EMPIRE: FROM HEGEMONY TO DECLINE

The first Hapsburg, Charles I (later the emperor Charles V), was the beneficiary of an institutional and cultural heritage built up by the Catholic Kings, Ferdinand and Isabella. The Spanish monarchy respected a medieval tradition whereby it frequently convoked the parliament, or *Cortes,* and governed with them. It presided over a society of Estates, with the nobility and the church as privileged orders, as well as a number of cities and corporate villages. This political order was set against the background of an agrarian economy that had links to the international wool trade, a dynamic textile industry, and a driving commercial and financial sector.

Society was relatively plural. The coexistence between Christians, Muslims, and Jews had not yet entirely broken down. After the expulsion of the Jews in 1492, those who remained (as *conversos)* continued to wield considerable influence; there was also an abundant population of *Moriscos.*[4] A complex relationship existed between the *hidalgos* (or lesser nobility) and the common people, with a modicum of distance and rivalry between the two estates, but also a certain degree of cultural homogeneity and social mobility—the result of common experience of centuries of reconquest and armed occupation of the land. Several kingdoms made up the Spanish monarchy. Castilians perceived themselves as quite different from Aragonese. But even Castile was a confederation of cities all equal to each other, among which there was no recognized capital.[5]

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The legacy of Ferdinand and Isabella offered a variety of alternative paths toward more deeply integrating this society. The possibility of a unified Spanish realm of the various kingdoms was never seriously considered, but the kings moved decisively toward reinforcing their authority by imposing religious uniformity on their subjects, thus laying the foundation for a teleocratic activist state.[6] However, the same legacy could have resulted in a civic path reinforcing the constitutional tradition and, eventually, consolidating a more open and commercial economy. In turn, this might have pointed toward a more flexible society—so long as there were not immense distances between the privileged orders and the commoners—and, with an accompanying extension of higher education, to a cultural space open to development.[7] It might have favored the emergence of a political community with a relatively well-defined territorial base, under a limited public authority.

This is no mere speculation; indeed, it was, to an extent, the path that the leaders of the *Comunidades* had begun to map out by time Charles of Hapsburg, the grandson of the Catholic Kings, arrived in Spain. The *comuneros* confronted their new king with political demands: regular convocation of the *Cortes,* effective codecision on taxes, and the primacy of Castilian interests over those of international politics. They left their vision of a desirable socioeconomic order unarticulated.[8] Confrontation led to war, which ended with the *comuneros'* defeat in 1521—closing one historical path and opening another.

Charles made prudent use of his victory. Respecting the constitutional tradition and Castilian sentiments, he drew up a compromise with the church and the nobility (including the *hidalgos*) so as to involve them in his imperial strategy. The Hapsburgs recognized certain constitutional limits, and convoked the *Cortes* with regularity, yet they attempted to manipulate and persuade its members in order to fund their foreign-policy operations. To do so, the monarchy appealed to the interests of the privileged orders and took advantage of powerful cultural motives. Its attempts to reduce the importance of parliamentary institutions met with some resistance both in Castile and, particularly, in the kingdom of Aragon (which led to armed intervention in the 1590s and the 1640s).

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The kings tried to enlarge their power through several other means, with mixed results. They tried to ensure control of the system of justice by making judges dependent on royal authority, thus averting the venality of those offices and its consequences. In doing so, they prevented both the formation of a *noblesse de robe* and the relative autonomy of the magistrates and members of the legal professions who, as members of parliaments, would become the main power base in France for resistance to the absolute power of the kings—and who developed a public discourse that prepared the grounds for the cultural and constitutional changes of the late eighteenth century.[9] The Hapsburgs tried to control local government only intermittently and with poor results. In fact, they witnessed a devolution of power to seigneurs, landowners, and local oligarchies in the seventeenth century.[10] They did not have any clear goal to shape the whole of Spain into a continuous territory with clearly defined borders, uniformly subordinate to its rule. Neither were they interested in the development of a Spanish national sentiment. It is symptomatic that the attempt by the Count-Duke of Olivares to impose Castillian institutions in Catalonia, Portugal, and other kingdoms was unconnected to any idea of establishing a feeling of national community. Olivares sought to promote good relations between the various kingdoms, but he explicitly denied doing so in terms of a national objective, claiming, not without contempt, "I am not 'national'; that is for children."[11] Such a view was unconcerned with the emergence, and the potential uses, of a national sentiment.[12]

Yet if uninterested in nurturing a uniform national sentiment, the Hapsburgs were determined to ensure the religious homogeneity of their subjects, which they understood as a precondition of their own rule. The Inquisition provided the monarchy with an instrument for centralized and uniform social control under its direct supervision; it was present in all the kingdoms of Spain, subject not to the pope but to the king. Its main purpose was less to create a unified political community than to forge a socioreligious homogeneity that would facilitate the exercise of the king's authority. Although the Inquisition began by persecuting *conversos* and *Moriscos* suspected of keeping their old faith (and, of course, Protestants), after a time its main

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object was to police the thoughts and customs of Old Christians as well.

The Inquisition set up a machinery of control that worked without interruption for three centuries, with remarkable efficiency—at least if measured not in terms of the (relatively low) number of executions but by the high number of those tried and sentenced to minor sanctions (only about one-fifth of those prosecuted were absolved), and the endurance of the consequent stigma and intimidation they faced.[13] The work of the Inquisition was reinforced by religious missions in towns and villages, by forbidding study abroad (in 1558), and by censoring books (first on the basis of civil and ecclesiastical censorship, and later through direct censorship by the Inquisition). This was complemented by the prohibition on importing books or printing, distributing, selling, reading, or even owning works listed on the *Index Librorum Prohibitum*.[14]

If these policies were successful from the rulers' viewpoint, in the long run they had quite negative consequences on the development of a public sphere in Spain. They reduced the plural, diverse nature of society. They encouraged a pattern of dissembling in the sphere of intimate beliefs; strengthened the *takiya,* or habit of dissimulation, among the remaining *Moriscos* and the cryptojudaism of some of the *conversos*; and, as indicated in a letter from Luis Vives to Erasmus in 1534, they effectively silenced personal opinion: "We live in difficult times when we can neither speak out nor remain silent without danger."[15] Philosophical books and reading came to be associated with dangerous and suspicious objects and activities, thus reducing the frequency, intensity, and freedom of debates in the heart of society on a wide range of matters.

In the end, Spain was to be kept under control for reasons that went beyond the rulers' domestic interests. The Hapsburgs' domestic politics was subordinated to what they understood to be Spain's crucial role in a world historical context: that of defending the Catholic faith—and, therefore, containing the Turks and the Protestants—while simultaneously promoting the interests of their house, which goal was viewed as happily consonant with, indeed interlinked to, the first. In this, the main instrument of Spanish hegemony—other than diplomacy and

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religious propaganda—was a permanent army, the *tercios*. While a model of outstanding organization, logistical capacity, and military efficiency (the Spanish infantry was unbeaten until the battle of Rocroi in 1634), because of the state's endemic fiscal crisis it was always burdened by the problem of getting paid.[16]

We are thus brought to the crucial point of the economic basis of Spanish imperial power. Princes face the dilemma of choosing between a strategy of exploiting resources in the short term or one of trying to increase the prosperity of their society and, with it, the tax base, so that although income might fall in the short term, it will increase in the long term. It may be that the fewer the institutional limitations on the monarch, the more likely he will adopt a predatory, short-term attitude towards his subjects. The likelihood for such an outcome increases when his survival is threatened.[17] The Hapsburg state in Spain lived on the edge between total victory and complete disaster. It survived by force of arms and by expedient behavior to obtain resources to meet the next challenge, but the unending fiscal crisis that resulted was unsustainable. Currency manipulations, expropriations, fraudulent bankruptcies, and forced renegotiations of loans led ultimately to a crisis of confidence on the part of potential moneylenders and Spanish subjects as to the state's financial commitments.

Carried away by past conquests and victories, the monarchy overstretched itself—adopting the motto of *plus ultra,* harboring dreams of universal domination, believing itself favored by divine providence.[18] It ended up obsessed with enhancing its reputation abroad.[19] Ironically, the monarchy allowed its internal reputation to be irreparably damaged by violating its own rules, exploiting its subjects and dislocating the country's economy—which only began to recover in the last third of the seventeenth century.[20] This greatly diminished the state's ability to finance its military apparatus, and to face, in the last half of that century, the rivalry of France.

In time, the political elites suffered a loss of reputation and self-confidence. Having begun with a feeling of exceeding power, they ended with one of gloom and melancholia, as befitted a people bound to a duty impossible to fulfill. If Olivares, in a letter to the Count of Gondomar, regarded himself as a man

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"determined to die bound to the oar till no piece of it was left unbroken," Philip IV felt himself in a ship about to go down.[21] Indeed, both state and society declined. The economy contracted, the processes of social mobility slowed down, the Estates became more rigid (due partially to the growing obsession with the *estatutos de limpieza de sangre,* or laws regarding the purity of blood), and the long decline of the university was not balanced by other institutions of learning.[22]

ERASMIANS AND SCHOOLMEN, GREAT WRITERS AND ARBITRISTAS

The two currents of thought represented by the Erasmians and the School of Salamanca, although in contention with each other, facilitated the compromise between the Hapsburgs and their Castilian subjects after the *Comunidades'* defeat. Even more significantly, they helped to manage the unstable equilibrium between the legacy of the relatively nomocratic order of the past and the new demands of the Hapsburg monarchy's imperial strategy.

As Bataillon emphasized, Erasmus's influence in Spain was extraordinary, especially in the 1520s and 1530s. It spread to a wide circle of magnates, high-churchmen, noblemen and royal officials, university scholars and humanists (particularly at the university of Alcalá de Henares), and educated readers; it also reached more humble sectors of the population. His influence can be traced up to the early 1600s.[23] Erasmus's message emphasized the prince's traditional missions of ensuring peace and justice, while dissuading him from using his temporal power to coerce the conscience of his subjects. Instead, Erasmus encouraged sovereigns to listen to their subjects' advice and seek their acquiescence. He suggested a foreign policy aimed at ensuring a similar world order of peaceful exchanges and mutual toleration. Equally important was Erasmus's advocacy of a way of life centered on individual self-awareness and self-confidence, on the individual's disposition to engage in dialogue and cultivate his individuality. It was a message that proposed dialogue both with God and with fellow men, demanding of individuals a commitment to interactive relationships of relative equality

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and reciprocity. It suggested that individuals should trust their own reason and sentiments, renouncing intermediaries (in particular, the clergy) and the arguments of authority alike in favor of engaging directly in a trusting relationship with the world, and in a benign and well-tempered form of religiosity. Erasmus's apologia for the reading of books (either sacred or profane) should be seen in the context of his moral exhortation to man's sociability and self-confidence. Reading was a way to enlarge one's circle of social interaction; it both improved and asserted one's powers to understand God's words and signs, to discriminate between good and evil, and to choose freely.[24]

This message bore an affinity with the predicament in which large sectors of the Spanish population then found themselves; hence its success. It offered Spaniards a language in which to express their disposition to live in freedom and to make decisions by themselves at a time when many had not yet been tamed by the converging pressures of the state and the church. It was a moment in which they sought the opportunity to expend their energies on the imperial adventure, both in Europe and the Indies. Spaniards shared a general sensation of distant horizons opening up before them; anything seemed possible. This is why Erasmus's opinions invigorated so wide a range of thought as the discourse of Alfonso and Juan de Valdés, Juan de Vergara, and Archbishop Carranza (or *El Brocense*), as well as the more humble, mystic discourse of the *alumbrados* of Pastrana.[25]

But Erasmus's influence met increasing resistance on the part of the church. In the conflict that was to set Catholics against Protestants for the next two centuries, Erasmus would become regarded by both sides as irrelevant or suspect. After a time, the church, alerted by the mendicant orders, recognized in his lukewarm attitude to the ecclesiastical institution a hostile discourse that had to be marginalized and silenced.[26] Once it grasped that the division between Catholics and Protestants turned on the question of institutional prerogatives—that is, the privilege of the visible church to administer the sacraments and uniquely claim authoritative interpretation of the Bible—the School of Salamanca, including Francisco de Vitoria himself, lost no time in playing the anti-Erasmian card fully.[27] The 1527 theological debate in Valladolid over Erasmus' position was inconclusive, but from then on pressure mounted inexorably.[28]

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The final victory of the Schoolmen over the Erasmists was a moment of historical change, coinciding with the major decisions of Charles in favor of rapprochement with the papacy, support for the Counter Reformation, and steps toward the creation of a powerful state determined to defend the Catholic faith *ad extra* and *ad intra*. In contrast with the Erasmian ideal, the international scenario was now viewed as a state of permanent war—either declared or latent—against Protestants and Turks (and France, as she was a potential ally of both) in Europe and the Mediterranean. At home, the task was setting in motion a program assuring social and ideological unity by means of controlling the reading of books and unregulated forms of religiosity. A lack of sympathy towards pietism and mental prayer was combined with a refusal to permit access in the Castilian language to theological debates and the scriptures they concerned. Here was the rationale for Melchor Cano's attack on the Jesuits; here was the motivation for the inquisitorial trial against Bartolomé Carranza, the Archbishop of Toledo.[29] Translation of the Bible into the vernacular was plainly forbidden (the first authorized translation in Spanish came only in 1791–1793); even translations of the fragments of the Gospels and the Epistles to be read in the mass were prohibited by the Inquisitor Sotomayor in 1640. Suspicion of reading was not restricted to religious books but spilled over to other literary genres—particularly to novels, comedies, and works of fiction, which were subjected to frequent interdictions.[30]

Nevertheless, implementation of that program took time, became mired with other considerations, and had to run against opposing trends. Certainly the thought of the School of Salamanca, and that of Spanish Schoolmen in general, was not reduced to assisting the monarch in the legitimation of the monarchs' imperial goals or domestic policy. In the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries a substantial part of scholastic thought was devoted to the problem of redefining the constitutional tradition, active participation in the public debate, and a better understanding of the extended order of economic life and international politics.

Grounded, through Thomas Aquinas, in the classical authors, the School of Salamanca developed a contractual reading of the nature of political power. A community joined by such a con-

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tract would then delegate (or deny) this power to the magistrate or monarch. Within this general frame, a debate emerged within the School between adherents of two opposing theories. One, articulated by the Jesuit Francisco Suárez, emphasized the irreversible nature of this delegation of power; the other, advocated by Juan de Mariana, another Jesuit, stressed the dependency of the prince on his community, the importance of the consent and advice of the *Cortes,* the right to resist the unjust magistrate if necessary—and, in the extreme, the justification of civil resistance and tyrannicide.[31] Both sides shared a commitment to a grand strategy that synthesized matters of principle with the interests of the Hapsburgs, of Spain, and of the pope, thus basing the rule of the Catholic prince over both his own subjects and his external enemies on a number of rationales. Yet these debates took place within a tradition having a strong constitutionalist component that never associated any aura of holiness to its kings, and that, in contrast to the French, rejected royal absolutism.[32]

Their reading of the contractual genesis of civil power explains the position of the Schoolmen in the controversies over justifying the Spanish conquest in the Indies. They refused to accept the assertion that a Papal Bull could bestow the right of conquest on the kings of Spain and Portugal. In Vitoria's judgment, the pope exceeded his authority by claiming an exclusive right to bestow something over which he had no power. They also denied that the natural inferiority of the Indians—so held because of their presumed incapacity to rule themselves—was sufficient reason for Spanish dominion. To the contrary, they took note of the Indians' practices of self-government and their acceptance of most of the customs associated with the *ius gentium,* including those of commerce and property rights. Only after elaborate reflection did the scholars recognize the authority of the monarch over the Indians, and then only a limited and conditional authority centered on the monarch's duty to protect against usurpation of the Indian's property by the *encomenderos* (or estate-owners).[33]

In general, the Schoolmen's view on the international order and on constitutional issues was in keeping with their thinking on the functioning of the economic order. Their reflections were

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based partly on the scholastic tradition, but more significantly on close observation of the commercial and financial practices of the time.[34] This led them to develop an early understanding of price movements, and what Luis de Molina referred to as the "mathematical" or "natural" price, on the basis of unforeseeable circumstances resulting from a combination of scarcity and human wants.[35] It also enabled them to explain inflation by pointing to the amount of money in circulation.[36]

The Schoolmen must be seen as participants in the debate on public policy and advisers on public affairs, acting in the role of experts predicting the practical consequences and moral connotations of policy. Whether as councilors or confessors, their advice was solicited by the king and his officials, the noblemen of the Royal Councils, members of the *Cortes,* town councilors, and judges in the *audiencias* whenever any important measure had to be decided.[37] At the same time, both Erasmians and Schoolmen must be understood in the broader context of a country that had undergone extraordinary economic and demographic growth as well as cultural expansion. The university system expanded to meet the needs of the imperial administration. In the sixteenth century about one-third to one-quarter of the Castilian hidalgos (about one-tenth of the population) had some university experience, but literacy was also common and about 20 to 30 percent of the Castilian male population was literate by the end of the century.[38] This was the cultural expansion that was eventually checked, and partially reversed, by the Inquisition and other practices of thought control developed by church and state.

Public debate gradually adjusted to the complex evolution of the Hapsburg state and society. On the one hand, what is distinctive about the Spanish public sphere on the threshold of the seventeenth century is the presence within it of an extraordinary body of expressive culture, an extremely vital religious and artistic current devoted mainly to legitimizing the Hapsburg state and its historical project. A plethora of cultural messages sought to justify and make visible the monarchy's authority by exalting its image and making plausible its pretensions of primacy in the social order. These messages supported the state's self-appointed task of societal salvation and, on this basis,

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justified its grand strategy and the extension of its authority. They articulated the reasons, voiced the exhortations, and stirred up the appropriate sentiments. This was achieved by means of religious activities such as *autos-da-fé,* sermons, processions, sacred plays, and popular missions as well as profane dramas that directly or indirectly exalted the figure of the monarch, the alliance of church and state, and the principles of a society based on Estates and the corporate village (as in the rural dramas of Lope de Vega and Calderón).[39] A similar trend emerged in painting, which cultivated religious and courtly genres, often clearly marked by closely allied political intentions.[40] On the other hand, however, the discourse of legitimation took place against a background of more subtle voices in the public sphere. Among them, two very different groups—whose voices mingle, despite the use of different genres and a concern with different audiences—are worthy of further note.

Miguel de Cervantes epitomizes a group of writers and artists who articulated a message of ambivalence toward, and distance from, the sociopolitical order of Hapsburg Spain. Cervantes's formative stage was marked by his experience at the Battle of Lepanto (1578) when the empire was at its height; traces of Erasmian influence can still be found in his work.[41] Cervantes's writings reflect a mixture of irony and sympathy towards his heroes and his world, leaving the structures of authority and the privileged orders, the church and the nobility, in the background. Between jokes and home truths, and through the incessant dialogue of two stylized figures—the *hidalgo* and the peasant, Don Quixote and Sancho Panza—he invites the reader to acknowledge the equivocal nature of a world where heroic deeds have scant relation to reality.[42] In exposing the inadequacies of the ethos of honor, or reputation—one of the central values of that society—he also takes an oblique stand as to the society of Estates. Similar messages of distance and ambivalence can be found in other mystical or lyrical figures, as well as in the painting of the period, notably in depictions of Saint Teresa of Avila, Saint John of the Cross, and Fray Luis de León, all of whom exemplify a detachment from the heroic modes prevailing in their world. Similarly, Diego Velázquez's portraits humanized the royal family and ridiculed the classical

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gods. And in the imagination of her compatriots, the figure of Saint Teresa served as a counterpoint to that of Santiago, patron saint of Spain and warrior against the Moors; Teresa's disputation of this patronage would prove the focus of intense debate in the seventeenth century.[43]

In the first half of that century, one crucial contribution of such baroque moralists as Francisco de Quevedo and Baltasar Gracián to the public sphere was the reminder of the limits to reality, which, especially in the case of Quevedo, was associated with an acute sense of the decay, last agony, and death of his world. Knowing full well that the age of the heroic stand had passed, Quevedo mourned it, making the culture that emerged to supplant it the object of his ridicule (as authors of the picaresque novel, like Mateo Alemán, generally did as well). Gracián, for his part, advised discreet adjustment to the new circumstances. All coincided in describing a social order subject to moral decay, whose resources of social trust had been reduced to a minimum, and in which generalized distrust—manifested in the manipulation of human exchanges, the cultivation of mere appearances, and an extravagant sense of honor—reigned supreme. For those moralists, the world was a theatrical stage, intrinsically unstable, subject to continuous and unpredictable mutations, in which every certainty was but a form of delusion. The new world was a confused labyrinth in which the individual had to find his way alone.

After the fiasco of the Armada in the late 1580s and the combination of plagues and famine a decade later, a growing and inescapable sense of the limits of Spanish power set in during the last period of Philip II. The very symbol of a king fettered to his self-appointed, never-ending task of controlling the minutiae of the empire's vast administrative machinery, virtually locked within El Escorial as his chosen place of work and death, suggested a king and a country behind events and on the defensive. Once Spanish rulers had harbored messianic aspirations; the Spanish motto of the 1580s was *non suficit orbis,* and in 1577 the Council of Indias thought that it was (merely) inappropriate to discuss the conquest of China at that (particular) time. Knowing that such expectations could no longer be sustained, and in view of the fact that divine provi-

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dence had refused the miracle the Spanish kings had hoped for, people like Diego Saavedra y Fajardo recommended prudent adjustments to renew the state, to contain the damage of dashed expectations, and to preserve what could still be preserved.[44] Thus, a gradual change of focus away from the outside world and toward domestic policy took place.

This was the effort in which the *arbitristas* of the late sixteenth century and throughout the seventeenth century were engaged. Writing in Spanish, they could reach a wider audience than could the Schoolmen.[45] Even so, they concentrated their efforts on persuading a community of decisionmakers (courtiers, noblemen, and officials) of the need to give priority to domestic problems. In general, the *arbistristas* shared the social and moral premises of the political elites they hoped to influence. They were driven by a desire to avoid the decline of the monarchy by averting the ruin of its various kingdoms, Castile first of all. Within the movement, those who called for an interventionist public authority in the economy—putting more emphasis either on trade, industrial activities, cattle-raising, or agriculture—debated with those who thought it was better for the prince to encourage a change in attitudes and customs (making Castilians more like other European peoples, or, in the sense of the day, more "like merchants") by adopting a policy of incentives intended to reshape society over a longer term.

However, most *arbitristas* underestimated or failed to grasp the basic links between Spain's decline and the Hapsburgs' institutions and cultural legacy. The relative weakness of constitutional limits on the crown's authority eased the way toward fiscal and financial policies that put ever-increasing burdens on merchants, industrialists, and peasants, while blocking the development of a market economy. The high value placed on achieving socioreligious homogeneity, although making governance easier in Spain than in France, also made for a far more rigid society. The strict maintenance of a society of Estates perpetuated networks of patronage and clientelism that weakened the *Cortes,* interfered with governmental administration, and corrupted the system of justice. The combined effects of the ethos of honor, the statutes of *limpieza de sangre* aimed at excluding the *conversos,* and the stigma in some milieus of

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manual labor (the *vileza de oficios*) created a climate inimical to commercial or industrial entrepreneurship, reinforced a pattern of social conformity (particularly among the middle classes and the intellectual milieu), and greatly slowed progress towards a system of generalized social and cultural exchanges.[46] Religious homogeneity, closely guarded by both church and state, together with the gradual reduction of external contacts and the decline of the universities (which, increasingly focused on legal studies, were useful for attaining a bureaucratic position) led to the cultural impoverishment of the country, weakening the public sphere and, finally, making a return to the constitutional tradition impossible.

THE BOURBON STATE AND THE ILUSTRADOS' RESPONSE

The change of century brought about a change of dynasty and a redefinition of the state. While the fundamentals of the teleocratic state went unquestioned, a further strengthening of royal authority and a partial secularization of state and society took place. The Bourbons belonged to a tradition of monarchy that strove constantly for an increase in discretional authority, intensified administrative centralization, and greater territorial uniformity. Spain's various kingdoms and constitutional arrangements were institutional obstacles to the Bourbons' project of absolute monarchy.[47] They believed that the lesson to be learned from the decline in Spanish power was that the Hapsburg political tradition had failed not because it had weakened the earlier constitutional tradition but because it had not entirely destroyed it—failing, in consequence, to give rise to a centralized state.

The Bourbons and their ministers proceeded to perform this task in a systematic way. They took advantage of the War of Succession (1700–1714) to put an end to the constitutional regime of the kingdoms of Aragon. Save for a few ceremonial occasions, they did not convoke the *Cortes* for an entire century.[48] They were helped by the absence of judicial parliaments and of a legal profession, which might have challenged their authority or supported the constitutional tradition (as had happened in France). They reversed the process of devolution to

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local authorities, reinforcing the presence of royal intendants in the provinces (even though the actual reach of these measures was limited).[49] Yet they kept in place the society of Estates and left the basic structure of the corporate village intact.

The Bourbons' efforts toward sociopolitical control were complemented by their policy toward the church. Unencumbered by any meaningful Jansenist opposition or Protestant enclaves (as had been true in France), they carried the subjection of the national church to the state much further.[50] Crucial in this effort was the expulsion in 1767 of the Jesuits and the emergence of a perspective toward clergymen that sought to transform them into state functionaries. The Bourbons maintained the Inquisition (albeit with a waning enthusiasm) as an instrument of control or intimidation; its use in this fashion was particularly evident by the end of the century, when it was employed to combat French revolutionary propaganda.[51] Given the priority of controlling rather than developing cultural institutions, some reform was attempted—though little actually done—to improve the universities.

The Bourbons tried to foster economic growth as a way to broaden their tax base, thus enhancing the resources available to finance the cost of an army and a navy serving their imperial policy. However, their interventions were erratic and had little effect, although some of their late plans for reform suggested a receptiveness to ideas of limited economic freedom that would capture the imagination of future generations. Despite their own hesitant efforts, it was their good fortune to benefit for a time from the spontaneous evolution of the economy, which saw increases in both population and agricultural production from the last decades of the 1600s (and, above all, from the 1740s onwards). In consequence, the state was able to increase public revenues while leaning towards preserving the social status quo.

In the first half of the eighteenth century Benito Feijóo continued the tradition of the *arbitristas*, who had appealed to a large audience through the diffusion of their writings.[52] The success of Feijóo's letters in the 1720s and 1730s represented a milestone in the formation of the public sphere.[53] In the second half of the century the process accelerated. There was a mod-

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erate expansion in the printing of books and newspapers and the seemingly spontaneous emergence throughout Spain of the *Sociedades de Amigos del País* (or "Associations of Friends of the Country"), as well as local academies for discussion and the promotion of education—partly in imitation of events in France—which were encouraged by public authorities.[54] These gatherings of the local nobility, lawyers, clergy, and some merchants were generally short-lived, possibly because of their submissiveness to the authorities and the authorities' change of attitude towards them as a result of the French Revolution. For a period of twenty to thirty years, however, an increase in the diffusion of newspapers and printed books, the growth in a reading public, the *tertulias,* and the tolerance of public associations laid the foundation for a current of enlightened opinion on public affairs.

A new generation of professionals and civil servants became interested in learning from the intellectual life of their time, mainly from England and France. They were respectful towards the king's authority, careful about the church, and conservative regarding the society of Estates. But they also tended to agree on the need to establish a system of incentives for private initiatives, both in the economic sphere by means of extending individual property rights and the rules of the market and in the cultural sphere by the spread of technical, humanist education.[55] To a point, they shared the critical judgment of some of their European contemporaries on the disastrous results of the grand strategy of the monarchs of the past, insofar as the formation of a "polite and commercial society," the creation of commercial confidence, and the development of a *vita civile* had been made extremely difficult, if not imposible.[56] To some extent they were recovering part of the Erasmian program, favoring an ethic of cultivation of the individual, encouraging confidence in his own resources, judgment, feelings of sociability, and industry. But while the Erasmians addressed a society of people with an affinity for their message, the *ilustrados* faced a society of men and women tamed, not to say broken, by state and church through two-and-a-half centuries of weak constitutional controls, socioeconomic rigidities, massive indoctrination, and a closely watched public space.[57]

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However, the *ilustrados* had access to resources that their predecessors had lacked, or enjoyed in a lesser degree: a somewhat wider reading public of "middle classes" and a more closely knit network of relationships and organizations dispersed throughout the country.[58] Together these circumstances sketched the first hazy outlines of a Spanish political community that appeared to integrate at least the elites of local societies from the center with those of the peripheries—Aragonese, Asturian, Catalan, or Guipuzcoan, for example—around Spanish as a common language and around a common discourse concerning subjects who were becoming members, possibly citizens, of a common polity. They considered themselves fortunate in having relatively easy and continuous access, for a time, to high officials who seemed to share some of their ideas.[59] In fact these ministers favored mixing a small dose of economic freedom with a heavy dose of government activism. The *ilustrados* understood this as an opportunity to translate their ideas into actual reforms—such as those relating to the free internal trade of grain, and the disentailment of (some) ecclesiastical lands—or into projects for reform in local government, popular education, or the universities (which were still resisting any attempt to teach Newton's physics as late as the 1780s).[60]

Yet because of both the proclivities of the ministers and, more importantly, the general conditions of Spanish life, the achievements of the *ilustrados* were modest. Spain remained a backward society and polity throughout the eighteenth century when measured against the standards set by the British experience. British prime ministers were accountable to parliament and public opinion, and had to govern by a mixture of official patronage and party attachment—watched all the while by the popular press. The kings these ministers served enjoyed only limited control of foreign policy, reduced patronage, and minimal legislative independence.[61] They could not control the common-law courts or local government. They had to accommodate a vibrant and tumultuous society and, willingly or unwillingly, they allowed room for a tradition of cautious tolerance of popular protest to develop. They presided over the growth of commercial agriculture partly based on a sequence of Enclosure Acts that covered roughly one-fifth of all the acreage in

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England and Wales between 1750 and 1810. The century witnessed a flurry of growth in the activities of information gathering, propagandizing, petitioning, and lobbying.[62] Moreover, it saw an explosion of associations of all kinds, including religious associations at the margins of, or wholly outside, the established church (and often led by lay preachers).

By contrast, the most enlightened of the Spanish rulers, Charles III (who never overcame his fear of any form of popular protest after the riots of 1766), was extremely jealous of his absolute prerogatives. There was no parliamentary activity for nearly the entire century; when some limited activity did take place, in 1789, the *procuradores* were asked not to reveal the results, which were only published in 1830.[63] Disentailing a limited amount of the church's lands only became a possibility at the end of the period. The Inquisition was kept in place, even experiencing a modest revival in the 1720s and again at the end of the century. The press was subject to censorship and continuous interference by the government, which made impossible the growth of a critical journalism.[64] Despite a partial recovery of literacy, there were few bookstores (indeed, there was only one bookstore in Madrid until 1720).[65] Fear of censorship or the Inquisition was endemic, and was felt equally by Feijóo in the first half of the century and Jovellanos in the second.[66] That fear made so remarkable a geographer as Jorge Juan feel unable to express his opinions in favor of the Copernican theories until 1774, and led such authors as Leandro Fernández de Moratín, José Cadalso, and Juan Pablo Forner to renounce publishing some of their work in their lifetimes. No wonder that Voltaire wrote in 1767, in a letter to his Spanish friend the Marquis of Miranda: "You do not dare to tell to a courtier, from mouth to ear, what an Englishman would say publicly on the floor of the parliament."[67]

The *ilustrados* were only half aware of the gap between their own rather confused dreams of Spain's catching up with Europe and the hard facts of Spanish life. The limits of their understanding are especially revealed in the ambiguous nature of their relationship with those at the top and those at the bottom of the society they sought to reform. The *ilustrados* believed that the key to change resided at the apex of the social pyramid.

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This was a logical premise for people affected by a long cultural tradition based on the principles of the teleocratic state and educated in the unquestioned submission to the monarchy.[68] Every transformation of consequence, they believed, required political will at the top: the economy would depend on it, and culture should be directed from it. The sense that no sociopolitical coalition could possess the necessary will to carry out reforms without the assent of the monarch encouraged in many *ilustrados* a tendency to attribute, mistakenly, two virtues to the Bourbon monarchy and its governments: capacity for transforming the country, and inspiration by an enlightened spirit. The result was the construction of the imaginary figure of the enlightened despot. The *ilustrados* failed to see that the capacity of the king and his ministers was in fact limited, their power of transformation modest. *Ilustrado* thinkers accounted for neither the absolutist logic of the Bourbon tradition nor the fact that the will of the monarch and his civil servants would always be oriented primarily to the conservation and extension of royal authority, therefore preserving the essentials of the status quo. In fact, the crown was mindful of the defense of the lands of the nobility, its seignorial jurisdictions, its tax exemptions, and other privileges; it was careful to assert the Catholic faith, to uphold the church's place of honor, and to keep the Inquisition for its own purposes.

If their view of the monarch was somewhat cloudy, the *ilustrados* scarcely glimpsed the nature of the society at and below their station, in particular that of the corporate villages, their institutional arrangements, local power structures, and traditional culture. In consequence, they could not base their appeals to a social morality on a realistic view of contemporary society.[69] Despite their keen interest in agrarian reform, they failed to understand the breadth of the distance between the urban world they inhabited and the rural society they were supposed to educate and transform. Castilian villages had undergone a process of economic, social, and cultural decay due to fiscal pressure and dislocations of economic life and forced submission to military service.[70] The levels of economic prosperity and wide-ranging commercial exchanges, of literacy and frequency of access to the royal courts, declined or remained

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low for a prolonged period of time. In response, the *ilustrados* could only be struck by the remoteness, inertia, and ignorance they found in the large majority of the rural population.[71] Neither could they grasp the ambiguous character of the remaining intermediary structures between the two worlds. Peasants might have an interest in getting a hand over local lands controlled by church, nobility, or crown, which might conflict with the interests of churchmen and seigneurs. But they were attached to their religious beliefs and sentiments, and they understood themselves to be dependent on networks of patronage that linked them to these privileged orders. At the same time, the corporate villages' culture and institutions, as well as their political distance from the centers of power, allowed a tradition of local self-government to persist in many parts of the country—barely noticed or misunderstood by both the *ilustrados* and the king's civil servants—the vitality of which was to be demonstrated in a more dramatic fashion at the time of the French invasion.

FINAL REFLECTIONS

By the late eighteenth century, as England developed into a "commercial and polite society," making somehow real the dreams of a *vita civile,* Spain—despite economic and demographic growth—was still lagging far behind. Let us in closing return to the initial distinction between the nomocratic and teleocratic forms of the state, and to the idea of a peculiar "social hybrid" that would put together the basic elements of a nomocratic order with the particular character of a given community.

I have argued elsewhere that the writers of the Scottish Enlightenment referred to this peculiar social hybrid by the name of "civil society."[72] It was a nomocratic construct in that a public authority and its administrative apparatus were limited by and subject to the rule of law, respectful of open markets and of social pluralism, and accountable, in a public sphere, to a community of concerned, enlightened, polite, civic-minded citizens. At the same time, it comprehended a *particular* society or community with a distinct identity and precise territorial boundaries, standing apart from other particular societies within

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a larger international system. Because of its particularity, members of that *civitas* were urged (most emphatically by writers like Adam Ferguson) to develop the virtue of civic patriotism; and the state thus constituted was bound to have the *telos,* or mission, of upholding its particular identity and defending its borders, whether they demarcated territorial, cultural, or ideological distinctions. The emergence of such states had uncertain consequences for the international order. In fact, the civil societies that emerged on both sides of the Atlantic at the end of the Old Regime oscillated between what we may call a civil kind of foreign policy and an "uncivil" (or predatory) kind. The question thus remained open whether the mission of such a state in the international arena was simply to make room for the voice of the community it represented to be heard at the table of nations, or to do so while silencing the rest.

Seen from the perspective of the process by which a civil society is formed, a double and contradictory movement took place in Spain under the Old Regime. The transition from empire to regional power and finally to nation-state eased the way for the creation of a community of citizens, in that it helped would-be citizens to focus their public concerns on a particular community, thus reinforcing the moral-political bonds among them. Yet that transition also helped to create the conditions for a new sort of a teleocratic state equipped with the corresponding politics of faith—in this instance, a view of national interest that posited nations against nations and, in most cases, had but weak connections with past constitutional traditions.

Thus the potential for a vibrant civil society, seemingly in place at the beginning, was lost in the course of the events. In the early sixteenth century, Castile's leading strata oriented themselves towards an open and expanding universe, defined by a worldwide economic order, a broad political space, the *ius gentium* in the international arena paired with a constitutional tradition in the domestic arena, and a religious faith still open to the influence of a cosmopolitan humanism. Two-and-a-half centuries later, the *ilustrados* had narrowed the scope of their civic engagement to fit the frame of an orderly society on the French pattern, subject to a half-despotic authority; theirs was

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a nation-state set to play the game of prestige, riches, and military power with competitors of a similar character.

ENDNOTES

[1]Or their equivalents, "civil association" and "enterprise association." Michael Oakeshott, *On Human Conduct* (Oxford, England: Clarendon Press, 1990).

[2]Michael Oakeshott, *The Politics of Faith and the Politics of Skepticism,* ed. Timothy Fuller (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1996).

[3]Américo Castro, *España en Su Historia: Cristianos, Moros y Judíos* (Madrid: Grijalbo Mondadori, 1983), 264, 613.

[4]Benzion Netanyahu, *The Origins of the Inquisition in Fifteenth-Century Spain* (New York: Random House, 1995).

[5]I. A. A. Thompson, "Castile, Spain, and the Monarchy: The Political Community from *Patria Natural* to *Patria Nacional,*" in *Spain, Europe, and the Atlantic World,* ed. Richard Kagan and Geoffrey Parker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 127ff.

[6]Bartolomé Bennassar, *L'Inquisition Espagnole XVe–XIXe Siècle* (Paris: Hachette, 1979), 143, 162.

[7]Richard Kagan, "Las Universidades de Castilla, 1500–1700," in *Poder y Sociedad en la España de los Austrias,* ed. John Elliot, (Barcelona: Crítica, 1982).

[8]José Antonio Maravall, *Las Comunidades de Castilla* (Madrid: Alianza, 1970).

[9]David Bell, "The 'Public Sphere,' the State, and the World of Law in Eighteenth-Century France," *French Historical Studies* 17 (4) (1992): 912–934.

[10]I. A. A. Thompson, *Guerra y Decadencia: Gobierno y Administración en la España de los Austrias, 1560–1620,* (Barcelona: Crítica, 1981).

[11]Thompson, "Castile, Spain, and the Monarchy," 147.

[12]In contrast to Richelieu's greater awareness and use of it. Cicely V. Wedgewood, *Richelieu and the French Monarchy* (New York: Macmillan/ Collier Books, 1962).

[13]Bennassar, *L'Inquisition Espagnole.*

[14]Henry Schulte, *The Spanish Press, 1470–1966* (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1968), 70ff.

[15]Quoted in Marcel Bataillon, *Erasmo y España* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1966), 490.

[16]Geoffrey Parker, *Spain and the Netherlands, 1559–1659* (London: Collins, 1979).

[17]Douglass North and Barry Weingast, "Constitutions and Commitment: The Evolution of Institutions Governing Public Choice in Seventeenth-Century England," in *Empirical Studies in Institutional Change,* ed. Lee Alston,

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Thráinn Eggertsson, and Douglass North (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

[18]Geoffrey Parker, "David or Goliath? Philip II and his World in the 1580s," in Kagan and Parker, *Spain, Europe, and the Atlantic World,* 259.

[19]Henry Kamen, *Una Sociedad Conflictiva: España, 1469–1714* (Madrid: Alianza, 1984), 223.

[20]Fernand Braudel, *Autour de la Mediterranée* (Paris: Editions de Fallois, 1996).

[21]John H. Elliott, *El Conde-Duque de Olivares* (Barcelona: Crítica, 1990), 199; José Antonio Maravall, *La Cultura del Barroco* (Barcelona: Ariel, 1980), 436.

[22]José Antonio Maravall, *Poder, Honor, y Élites en el Siglo XVII* (Madrid: Siglo XXI de España, 1979); Antonio Domínguez Ortiz, *Las clases privilegiadas del Antiguo Régimen* (Madrid: Istmo, 1973); Richard Kagan, "Las Universidades de Castilla, 1500–1700," in Elliot, ed., *Poder y Sociedad en la España de los Austrias*; Juan Linz, "Intellectual Roles in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Spain," in *Intellectuals and Tradition, Part II*, eds. Shmuel N. Eisenstadt and Stephen R. Graubard (New York: Humanities Press, 1973).

[23]Marcel Bataillon, *Erasmo y España* (Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1966), 160, 172, 404, 435.

[24]Ibid., 80, 209.

[25]Ibid., 160–184.

[26]Ibid., 237.

[27]Ibid., 247; Quentin Skinner, *The Age of Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 141.

[28]Skinner, *The Age of Reformation,* 241ff.

[29]Bataillon, *Erasmo y España,* 703ff; Joseph Pérez, "Reforma y heterodoxias," in *Las Castillas Que No Fueron,* vol. 3 of *Historia de Una Cultura*, ed. Agustín García Simón (Valladolid: Junta de Castilla y León, 1995), 114.

[30]Roger Chartier, "Lectures et Lecteurs 'Populaires' de la Renaissance à l'Âge Classique," in *Histoire de la Lecture dans le Monde Occidental*, ed. Guglielmo Cavallo and Roger Chartier (Paris: Seuil, 1997), 325.

[31]Skinner, *The Age of Reformation,* 173, 345.

[32]Ibid., 113.

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